



Department
for Business
Innovation & Skills

BIS RESEARCH PAPER NUMBER 204

Apprenticeships Evaluation:
Employers

DECEMBER 2014

RESEARCH

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Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

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Research paper number 204

December 2014

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Summary

This report presents the findings of the employer survey component of the 2013-14 Apprenticeship evaluation. The survey explored the views and experiences of 4,030 employers whose employees had finished an Apprenticeship between August 2012 and March 2013. This survey builds on the findings of the 2013 apprentice employer survey and on qualitative follow-up research on the barriers and enablers to employer influence in Apprenticeships.

In light of the ongoing public investment in Apprenticeships and the reforms being made to the current system, it is critical for policymakers and those engaged in delivery to know more about how far Apprenticeships meet learners' and employers' needs, and to be able to identify which aspects of the programme are under-performing. This research will inform BIS and the SFA's strategies to ensure continual improvement and return on investment, as well as the ongoing implementation of the Apprenticeship reforms.

The profile of apprentice employers

The profile of apprentice employers is very similar to that found in 2013. Provision is concentrated in five framework areas: Business, Administration & Law; Health, Public Services & Care; Retail & Commercial Enterprise; Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies; and Construction, Planning & Built Environment. Workplaces tended to have provided only one Apprenticeship framework.

Most apprentices (62%) were employed in small workplaces with less than 50 staff, with a similar proportion (59%) in workplaces that were part of a larger organisation, typically a branch or site rather than a Head Office. Irrespective of organisation size, decisions about Apprenticeship recruitment were generally made at site level.

Most workplaces had only one (60%) or two (18%) apprentices who had finished their training during the reference period. Workplace and organisation size were strong determinants of apprentice numbers. Employers providing more traditional frameworks had fewer apprentices, partly reflecting their generally smaller size.

Around two-thirds of employers (68%) had provided Level 2 frameworks and around half of them (51%) had provided Level 3 (18% provided both). The proportion providing Level 3 has increased slightly compared with 2013. Employers providing Retail & Commercial

Enterprise predominantly provided Level 2, while Level 3 was more common amongst employers providing Health, Public Services & Care.

Employers providing more traditional frameworks were the most likely to have offered Apprenticeships to young people aged 16-18. The proportion offering Apprenticeships to 16-18s has declined slightly since 2013, with correspondingly more employers offering Apprenticeships to 19-24s and people aged 25+. The latter were more common amongst employers providing Health, Public Services & Care frameworks.

Taking on apprentices

There is continuing evidence that the concept of 'Apprenticeships' resonates less with those employers providing less traditional frameworks and to people in older age groups. Only six in ten employers were aware that the training they had provided was an Apprenticeship, which fell to around four in ten (37%) of those who had drawn their apprentices from existing staff (a reduction since 2013).

In terms of self-reported knowledge, seven in ten employers (71%) felt they knew a 'great deal' or 'fair amount' about Apprenticeships. Knowledge was highest among large workplaces with 100+ staff and, linked to this, among employers with higher volumes of apprentices who employed apprentices across multiple levels, Frameworks, and age ranges. There was also a strong link between knowledge of Apprenticeships and whether employers had influenced or wanted to influence the training (a key element of the current Apprenticeship reform programme).

Employers were split fairly evenly by the method that they used to recruit apprentices: 48% recruited from existing staff and 46% recruited externally with only a small proportion using both approaches. Recruitment approach was strongly influenced by framework(s) provided, with a clear distinction between employers providing 'traditional' Apprenticeships (who were more likely to recruit specifically) and those providing newer frameworks, who more likely to recruit from existing staff. Younger apprentices were more likely to have been recruited specifically, as were those working for smaller organisations and in workplaces with only one apprentice.

At workplaces where there was specific recruitment to Apprenticeship positions, the tendency was to use fixed-term contracts, and for apprentices to be recruited to new positions rather than as replacement demand for staff who were leaving. By contrast, the

majority of employers who recruited internally said this was primarily to improve employees' skills in their existing jobs, rather than to prepare for a new job role.

The importance of employer influence

Like last year, only half of employers (49%) who had received provider training said they were able to influence the structure, content, delivery and duration of the Apprenticeship **before** it started, while 58% said they were able to influence the training **during** the Apprenticeship. Of those who had no influence, around a quarter (26%) said they did not want any. Larger workplaces and those who knew more about Apprenticeships were more likely to have had any influence over the training they received.

Around one third of employers who did not get any influence said they wanted some (35%) an increase since 2013 (29%). Smaller workplaces were more likely than larger ones to have wanted influence but not been able to get it.

Just over a quarter of employers (28%) said that they would have liked to have changed something about the content, structure, delivery or duration of their Apprenticeship training. Of these, 60% had *asked* the training provider to make changes but 40% had not. CHAID analysis demonstrated that agreement with statements *"We know who to speak to about making changes to the Apprenticeship training we get"* and *"Our training provider would adapt the Apprenticeship if we asked them to"* were most predictive of employers' decisions to *ask* for change if they wanted it, underlining the importance of the employer-provider relationship.

Employer satisfaction with Apprenticeships

Overall, 80% of apprentice employers were satisfied with their main Apprenticeship programme (scoring it 6 out of 10 or higher). Three in five (62%) rated it at 8 out of 10 or more, including one in three (32%) who gave it an especially high rating (a score of 9 or 10), indicating they were very satisfied. Last year these figures were similar: 60% rated their main Apprenticeship at 8 out of 10 or above, including 30% scoring it 9 or 10.

As in 2013, overall satisfaction varied by employer size and main framework. Those providing the Health, Public Service & Care framework as their main Apprenticeship were significantly more likely to be very satisfied than employers nationally (68%), and more so than in 2013 (60%). In contrast, and as found in 2013, employers whose main framework

was Construction, Planning & Built Environment or ICT were less likely than average to be 'very satisfied'.

High levels of overall satisfaction were also linked to employers' reported levels of influence over the Apprenticeship programme. Just a quarter of employers who had no influence but wanted some were 'very satisfied' (23%), compared with three-quarters (74%) of those who had influence before and after the training started.

Looking into satisfaction with various aspects of the Apprenticeship programme, employers were most satisfied with the quality of the training and assessment, together with the flexible way these were offered by their training provider. As in 2013, they were least satisfied with their ability to influence the content, structure or duration of the Apprenticeships, and with the quality of applicants.

Like last year, 35% of employers said they would recommend Apprenticeships *without being asked*, however there was a drop (from 47% to 44%) in those who said they would do so *if asked*. Thus, this year there was a high overall 'recommendation score' of 79%, but this was below last year's score of 82%. Those who wanted influence and did not have any were significantly less likely to recommend without being asked (24%), and more likely to be neutral or to recommend against if asked.

The benefits of Apprenticeships

Employers who were *aware* that at least some of their trainees had been doing an Apprenticeship were asked why they had opted for Apprenticeships, relative to other forms of training available to them. Business relevance was the most common reason (mentioned by 25%) while the least common was that Apprenticeships were low cost or free (mentioned by 13%).

Different reasons for providing Apprenticeships were associated with different levels of overall satisfaction. Employers who offered Apprenticeship training because they considered it to be the best way of improving recruitment and retention or the most relevant form of training to their business were more likely than others to be very satisfied (71% and 69% respectively).

These reasons for providing Apprenticeships were reflected in anticipated and achieved benefits. Maintaining or improving future skill levels in the business was the most

commonly anticipated benefit (95%), followed by improving product/service quality and improving productivity (selected by over 80% of employers).

Almost nine in ten employers who had hoped for benefits received them, with the most 'successful' being 'improving staff morale' (91% of those hoping to achieve this said it was realised), improving or maintaining future skills levels (89%), improving productivity (89%) and improving product or service quality (86%). In contrast, the benefits which employers felt were least realised (though still accounting for a majority of those expecting them) were 'winning business' (73% of employers hoping to achieve this say it was realised), and 'ability to attract good staff' (79%) – both of which were in line with 2013.

Apprentice completion, retention and progression beyond Level 3

Almost eight in ten employers (78%) said that *all* of their apprentices who finished their Apprenticeship between 1st August 2012 and 31st March 2012 had *completed* their Apprenticeship, similar to last year. As with last year, employers offering the Health, Public Service & Care framework were significantly more likely (82%) to have had all their apprentices complete: these employers were more likely to have provided Apprenticeships to existing staff, and (related to this) those aged 25+. Relative to the national profile significantly more employers had all their apprentices complete where they were able to influence the Apprenticeship before and during training.

Two-thirds (65%) of employers said that all of their apprentices who finished training between August 2012 and March 2013 were still working for them at the time of the survey (a year to 18 months later). Thirteen per cent stated that some of their apprentices were still with them, whilst a fifth (20%) said that their apprentices had all left. This pattern is similar to 2013. Retention is higher among those who deliver Apprenticeships to existing staff, and to staff aged 25+.

Of those who had Level 3 apprentices complete their training in the reference period, over half (54%) said they offered some form of progression to higher level qualifications, and one in four (24%) had apprentices who had gone on to study these. Offering higher level qualifications to Level 3 completers was motivated mainly by workforce development and staff retention strategies, together with a considerable minority who offered them specifically to enable staff to move into management positions. Among employers who did not offer their Level 3 completers any training that led to higher-level qualifications, the

main reasons were 'no demand / need', 'financial constraints', and 'lack of knowledge' about what to offer.

Current and future involvement in Apprenticeships

Similar to 2013, three in five employers (59%) had current apprentices at the time of the survey. Amongst those *without* current apprentices, the majority said that they planned to continue their involvement with the Apprenticeship programme (59%) or were reviewing it (22%). This is consistent with 2013 and indicates that, in most cases, the lack of current apprentices was a temporary gap rather than a decision to discontinue with Apprenticeships altogether.

As in 2013, the majority of employers (79%) are committed to the Apprenticeship programme and plan to continue to offer Apprenticeships. One in six (12%) were currently undecided or were reviewing their involvement and only nine per cent were not planning to continue. Although still a minority, this represents a small but significant increase since last year and appears to be driven by a rise among small employers (where the proportion who do not plan to offer more Apprenticeships was up from 9% to 13%).

Length of involvement with the programme and size of organisation were important determinants of the likelihood of future involvement (with larger organisations more committed). By framework, those employers providing more traditional Apprenticeships such as Construction, Planning and Built Environment and Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies were slightly less likely to be committed to the programme in future (as in 2013). Importantly for the Apprenticeship reforms that are currently being implemented to increase employer involvement, those who got all the influence they wanted were more likely than those who wanted influence but did not get any to be committed to offering Apprenticeships in future (83%, compared with 70%).

Overall, more employers projected that the number of apprentices they employ in future would expand rather than contract. In total, 26% expected to provide more Apprenticeship places than they had done in the past, compared to 13% who expected to offer fewer (or would not offer any at all).

1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of the Apprenticeship Evaluation Employer Survey 2013-14. The survey explored the views and experiences of 4,030 employers whose employees finished an Apprenticeship programme between August 2012 and March 2013. It builds on the findings of the previous survey undertaken by Ipsos MORI in 2013 and on qualitative follow-up research, also by Ipsos MORI, conducted on the barriers and enablers to employer influence on Apprenticeships.

Policy context

Expanding and improving Apprenticeships are key components of the ambition to develop a more flexible and better educated workforce, outlined in the Coalition's *Plan for Growth*¹. Aligned with this, it is one of BIS' strategic priorities to build a more internationally competitive skills base and to promote more opportunities for individuals to realise their potential. Apprenticeships are also a vital component of the education-to-work transition routes available to young people, especially with the advent of raising the compulsory participation age to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015. Accordingly, the BIS *Business Plan* for 2012-2015 includes a priority to expand and improve the quality of the Apprenticeship programme including by creating 40,000 additional adult Apprenticeship places focusing on the young unemployed; creating 10,000 additional advanced and Higher Apprenticeships; and implementing ways to make Apprenticeships more accessible to Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs)².

In *Investing in Skills for Sustainable Growth*³, BIS commits to streamlining the FE and skills landscape to make it more flexible and responsive to the needs of learners and businesses, essentially shifting the balance further towards a demand-led rather than supply-driven system. Recent reviews of the role, delivery and assessment of Apprenticeships by the entrepreneurs Jason Holt⁴ and Doug Richard⁵ have reinforced the move towards a more demand-driven approach. Richard recommended:

¹ HMT and BIS (2011) *The Plan for Growth*.

² BIS (2012) *Departmental Business Plan 2012-2015*. BIS. London.

³ BIS (2010) *Investing in Skills for Sustainable Growth*. BIS. London. <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/s/10-1272-strategy-investing-in-skills-for-sustainable-growth.pdf>

⁴ Holt, J. (2012), *Making Apprenticeships More Accessible to SMEs*. BIS. London. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/support-for-small-businesses-in-taking-on-apprenticeships>

- Targeting Apprenticeships at those who are new to a job role or role that requires sustained and substantial training;
- Focusing on what the apprentice can do when they complete their training and freeing up the process by which they get there;
- The basis of every Apprenticeship should be recognised industry standards;
- Every apprentice being able to reach a good level in English and maths before they complete their Apprenticeship;
- Government funding that incentivises investment in Apprenticeship training by giving purchasing power to employers; and
- Greater diversity and innovation in training.

Similarly, the Holt Review recommends rebalancing ‘purchasing power’ to allow small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to exert greater control on the supply-side of Apprenticeship provision. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) has recently launched a second round of its Employer Ownership Pilot, through which employers in England can access direct funding from government to design and deliver their own training, of which Apprenticeships form a major part.

In 2013, BIS published *Rigour and Responsiveness in Skills*⁶ which took on board many of the recommendations made by Holt and Richard, setting out six areas to improve the infrastructure of government-funded skills training, including: raising standards; creating Traineeships to help transition young people into the workplace; creating more meaningful and rigorous qualifications; using funding to incentivise greater responsiveness in provision; and equipping individuals and employers with better information to make more effective choices. The new Apprenticeship reform programme⁷ addresses the issues raised by Richard and Holt in the following ways:

⁵Richard, D. (2012), *The Richard Review of Apprenticeships*. BIS. London.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-richard-review-of-apprenticeships>

⁶ BIS (2013) *Rigour and Responsiveness in Skills*. BIS. London.

⁷ BIS (2013). *The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan*. BIS, London.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/253073/bis-13-1175-future-of-apprenticeships-in-england-implementation-plan.pdf

- It puts **employers in control** – leading the design of new Apprenticeship standards in their sectors.
- It aims to **improve quality** – assessment will be rigorous and synoptic⁸, focused at the end of the Apprenticeship, and graded.
- It seeks to **simplify the system** – the new standards will be concise and easy for both employers and learners to understand, encompassing the core skills and knowledge that are required to be fully proficient in a particular occupation.

Alongside the reforms, BIS have announced the creation of a number of employer-led Trailblazers for the new Apprenticeship process, focusing in high-growth and strategically important industry sectors. The aim is to give employers the opportunity to lead the development of new Apprenticeship standards in their sector as well as to develop the high-level assessment approaches that will be used to test them. While Phase 1 encompassed traditional industries and high-technology manufacturing sectors, the Phase 2 Trailblazers extend to a broader range of sectors and occupations including service industries and access to the professions. Phase 3 began in September 2014.

Aims of the research

The Apprenticeship evaluation comprises two extensive surveys of employers and apprentices, building on a baseline first undertaken in 2011-12 and then repeated in 2013. In light of the ongoing public investment in Apprenticeships and the reforms being made to the current system, it is critical for policymakers and those engaged in delivery to know more about how far Apprenticeships meet learners' and employers' needs, and to be able to identify which aspects of the programme are under-performing. The research will inform BIS and the SFA's strategies to ensure continual improvement and return on investment, as well as the on-going implementation of the Apprenticeship reforms.

Methodology

Ipsos MORI conducted a telephone survey with 4,030 employers whose staff had finished an Apprenticeship programme between 1 August 2012 and 31 March 2013. The survey fieldwork took place between the end of January and the end of March 2014. In-scope

⁸ Synoptic assessment encourages students to combine learning from different parts of a programme and to apply their skills in a way that demonstrates this accumulated knowledge and understanding.

employers were identified using the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) which contains a flag to identify the employer for each apprentice. The list of in-scope employers was then matched to the Blue Sheep database to append employers' telephone numbers, addresses, and other 'firmographic' information such as industry and number of employees (which was verified and updated during the interview if necessary). Information on Apprenticeship frameworks, levels and numbers of in-scope apprentices were derived and appended for each employer and these variables were also used to stratify the sample prior to selection.

The sample was disproportionately stratified by framework and number of apprentices to enable separate analysis for employers with large volumes of apprentices and for smaller frameworks. The data has been weighted to be representative of all employers whose employees finished their Apprenticeship during the reference period. More details on the methodology can be found in the Appendices to this report.

2. What do Apprenticeship employers look like?

Key findings

The profile of apprentice employers is very similar to that found in 2013. Apprentices are disproportionately concentrated in the same industrial sectors as last year. Similarly, provision is concentrated in five framework areas: Business, Administration & Law; Health, Public Services & Care; Retail & Commercial Enterprise; Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies; and Construction, Planning & Built Environment.

Frameworks in Business, Administration & Law were provided by employers in all sectors, possibly reflecting a more universal need for these skills. Workplaces tended to have provided only one Apprenticeship framework.

Most apprentices (62%) were employed in small workplaces with less than 50 staff, with a similar proportion (59%) in workplaces that were part of a larger organisation, typically a branch or site rather than a Head Office. Irrespective of organisation size, decisions about Apprenticeship recruitment were generally made at site level.

Most workplaces had only one (60%) or two (18%) apprentices who had finished their training during the reference period. Workplace and organisation size were strong determinants of apprentice numbers. Employers providing more traditional frameworks had fewer apprentices, partly reflecting their generally smaller size.

Around two-thirds of employers (68%) had provided Level 2 frameworks and around half (51%) had provided Level 3 (18% provided both). The proportion providing Level 3 has increased slightly compared with 2013. Employers providing Retail & Commercial Enterprise predominantly provided Level 2, while Level 3 was more common amongst employers providing Health, Public Services & Care.

The proportion of employers providing Apprenticeships to 16-18 year olds has declined compared with 2013, from 71% to 65%. The most frequently cited reason (mentioned by 36% of employers not offering Apprenticeships to this age group) was that they cannot employ under-18s in their line of work (an increase from 29% last year).

2.1 Size and sector profile

This chapter provides a ‘firmographic snapshot’ of employers who had apprentices who finished their Apprenticeship between 1st August 2012 and 31st March 2013. The size and sector profile of employers offering Apprenticeships is (perhaps unsurprisingly) almost identical to that of last year’s employer survey⁹.

Industry sector

As in 2013, the vast majority (79%) of employers are private sector organisations. The remainder are fairly evenly split between the public sector (11%) and the voluntary sector (9%).

At a more detailed level, apprentice employers are concentrated in a relatively small number of industries. Like 2013, the most common are: ‘Human health and social work’ (23%); ‘Wholesale and retail’ (14%); ‘Accommodation and food’ (10%); ‘Other Services’ (9%) and ‘Construction’ (9%).

Similar to last year, the ‘Human health and social work’ sector continues to represent a disproportionately high proportion of employers who have apprentices, as the sector accounts for only 6% of employers in England as a whole (although a higher than average proportion of employers in this sector were not aware that their employees were doing Apprenticeships). In contrast, the sectors which continue to be under-represented in the provision of Apprenticeships relative to their national profile are ‘Information and communication’ (2% of apprentice employers compared with 6% nationally); ‘Transportation and storage’ (2% compared with 6%); ‘Administrative and support service activities’ (3% compared with 8%); and ‘Professional, scientific and technical activities’ (who represent 4% of apprentice employers compared with 14% of employers nationally).

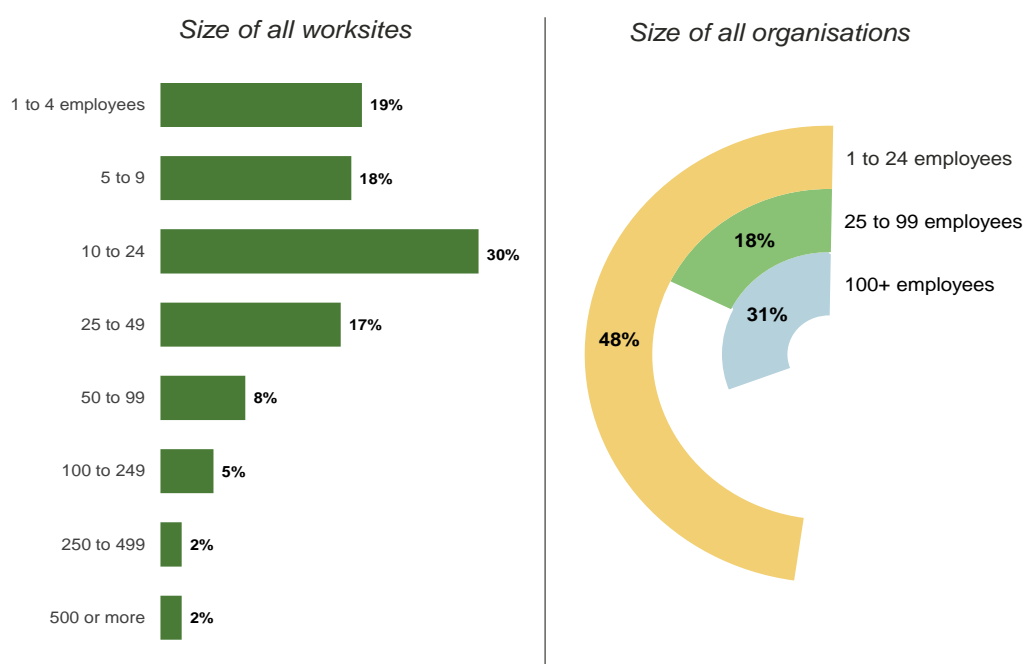
Employer structure and size

Just over half (55%) of apprentice employers were single site organisations. The remainder were multiple-site organisations with 34% operating as a branch and 11% functioning as the Head Office. This differs slightly from 2013, when there was a higher proportion of Head Offices (15%) and correspondingly fewer branches (30%).

⁹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/230001/bis-13-1125-Apprenticeships-evaluation-employer.pdf

The size profile of apprentice employers was very similar to last year. In terms of individual *workplace* size, two-thirds had less than 25 employees, with nearly a fifth (19%) having fewer than five employees. Looking at the size of the *whole* organisation¹⁰ the profile again mirrors last year. Nearly half (48%) of apprentice employers were organisations with 1 to 24 employees, whilst nearly a third (31%) had more than 100 employees (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Profile of apprentice employers by worksite and organisation size



Base: All (4030)

2.2 General profile

In this year's survey, new questions were asked about apprentice employers' recruitment, their outlook for the next 12 months, and their product market.

Recruitment

Over a quarter (26%) had expanded their staff numbers over the past 12 months. In contrast, 14% had experienced a drop in staffing. Whilst the majority of employers (59%) said that their size had remained about the same over the past 12 months, most (88%) reported that they *had* recruited somebody within the past two to three years.

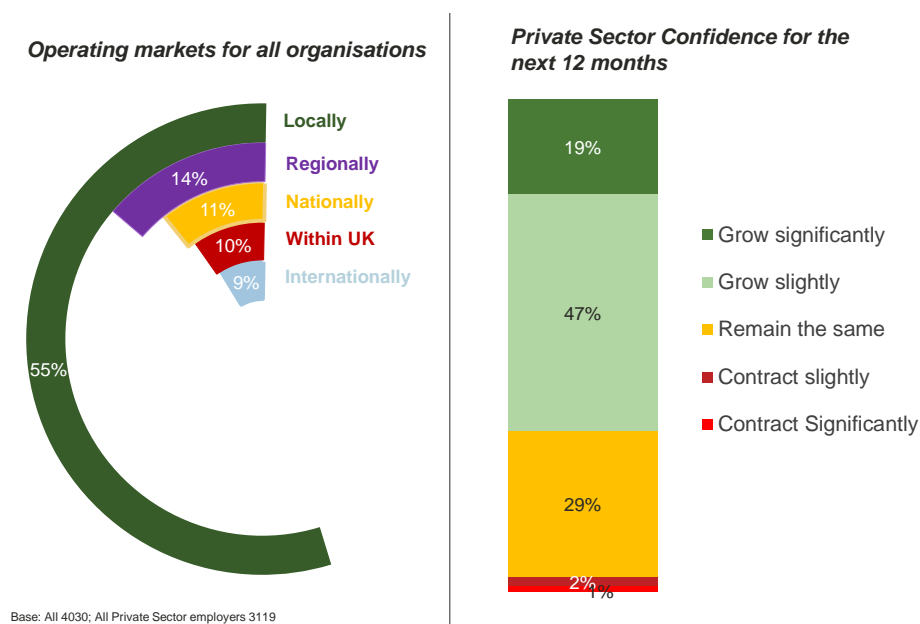
¹⁰ For multi-site organisations we take the combined employee total of all worksites. Naturally, for single-site employers, the size of 'workplace' and 'organisation' are the same.

Around two-thirds (68%) of recruiting employers had taken on someone who was starting their first job after leaving school, college or university. In contrast, 30% of recruiting employers had only hired individuals with previous work experience. These figures were mirrored in the age of the recruits, with 67% of employers saying they had recruited someone under the age of 25, and 30% indicating that they had only hired people older than 25. Recruitment of apprentices who were starting their first job was significantly more common for employers providing frameworks in Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care (75%) or Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies (75%). In contrast, employers providing the Health, Public Services & Care framework area were significantly less likely to have taken on someone to their first job straight from school, college or university (64%), reflecting the older age profile of staff within that sector.

Market and growth outlook

The majority of apprentice employers operated locally (55%) or within a specific region (14%) (Figure 2). Private sector companies were largely confident about the next 12 months, with most (66%) expecting their business to grow. Employers who operated only in local markets were much less likely to expect growth (12%) and much more likely to predict that their business would remain about the same (36%). This is not necessarily a negative, however, as many local companies may be small businesses who are not looking to expand.

Figure 2: Market and growth outlook among apprentice employers



2.3 Frameworks provided

Data on which frameworks employers had provided was taken from administrative records in the ILR and verified during the interview. This reflected the fact that some employers do not recognise that the training their staff are doing is an Apprenticeship (discussed in more detail in Section 3.1).

Similar to last year, the vast majority of employers (90%) with apprentices who finished between August 2012 and March 2013 offered a single framework. The 10% who offered more than one framework had a different sector profile to those who offered a single framework, being more likely to operate in Health (33% compared with 20%) or Accommodation (13% compared with 8%), and significantly less likely to operate in Other Services (3% compared with 10%) or Construction (4% compared with 9%).

The framework profile mirrors last year, with the same uneven distribution between 'newer' and 'traditional' frameworks (Figure 3). By some margin, the most common framework continues to be Business Administration and Law (34%, compared with 32% last year). This was again followed by two main groups:

- 'Newer' framework areas, each offered by more than one in five apprentice employers:
 - Retail & Commercial Enterprise, 23% (22% last year)
 - Health, Public Services and Care, 22% (22% last year); and
- 'Traditional' framework areas, each offered by around one in ten apprentice employers:
 - Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies, 10% (11% last year)
 - Construction, Planning, and Built Environment, 9% (10% last year).

As with last year, the provision of other frameworks is far lower by comparison.

Figure 3 demonstrates the relatively close match between the prevalence of all framework areas offered, and what employers regard as their main one (as might be expected given that most employers only offer one framework). The exception to this is 'Business, Administration and Law'.

Figure 3: Provision of all Apprenticeship frameworks and identification of ‘main framework’

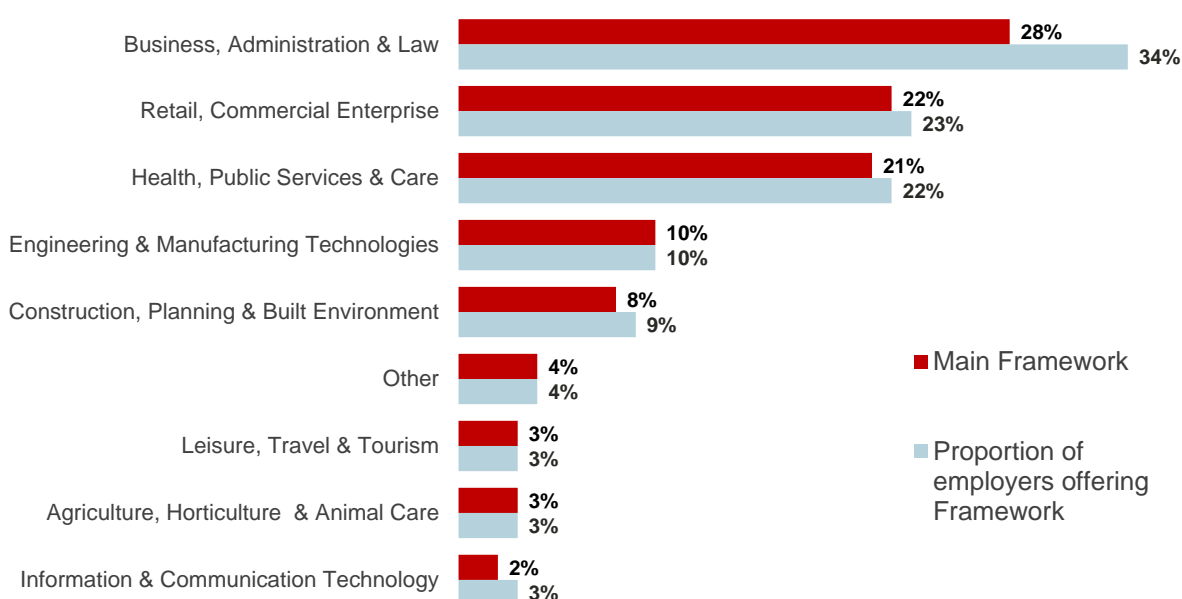


Figure 3 shows that the prevalence of the Business, Administration and Law framework overall exceeds the extent to which it is considered to be the ‘main framework’. In this sense, relative to the other frameworks, it is more likely to be viewed as a ‘secondary’ or ‘supplementary’ framework by employers. This is related to the more ‘universal’ nature of business and administrative skills which are often required –albeit to a lesser extent - across a broad range of more specialised sectors such as construction or health.

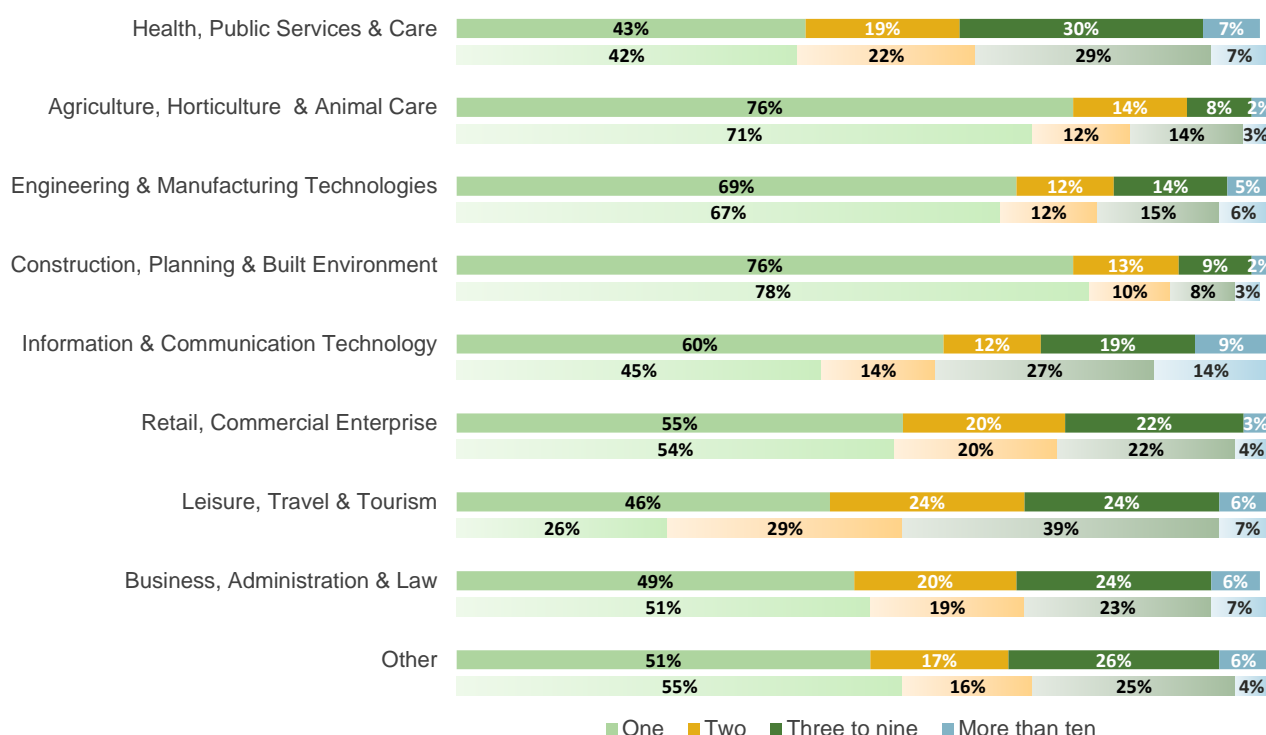
2.4 Apprentice numbers

The majority of apprentice employers (60%) had one apprentice who finished training between August 2012 and March 2013; 18% had two; and 18% had between three and nine. Only 3% had 10 or more apprentices finish during the reference period. This distribution is almost identical to 2013.

Similar to last year, larger employers were more likely to employ larger numbers of apprentices. Those providing the more traditional frameworks of Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care; Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies; and Construction, Planning & Built Environment were more likely to employ a single apprentice (which is linked to the smaller size profile of these employers).

Two variations relative to last year's profile were the Information & Communications Technology, and Leisure, Travel & Tourism frameworks. Across employers providing these frameworks there were significantly more with single apprentices, and fewer with 3-9 apprentices compared to last year (see Figure 4 below).

Figure 4: Number of apprentices finishing by framework in 2012/13 and 2013/14



Bars with gradient shading are data from 2012/13 survey

Base: All Frameworks 2013/14 (5159): Health Public Services & Care (1250); Agriculture Horticulture Animal Care (161); Engineering Manufacturing Technologies (481); Construction Planning Built Environment (310); Information Communication Technology (151); Retail Commercial Enterprise (896); Leisure Travel Tourism (180); Business, Administration Law (1554); Other (176). All Frameworks 2012/13 (5446): Health Public Services & Care (1386); Agriculture Horticulture Animal Care (266); Engineering Manufacturing Technologies (520); Construction Planning Built Environment (315); Information Communication Technology (218); Retail Commercial Enterprise (764); Leisure Travel Tourism (267); Business, Administration Law (1498); Other (230)

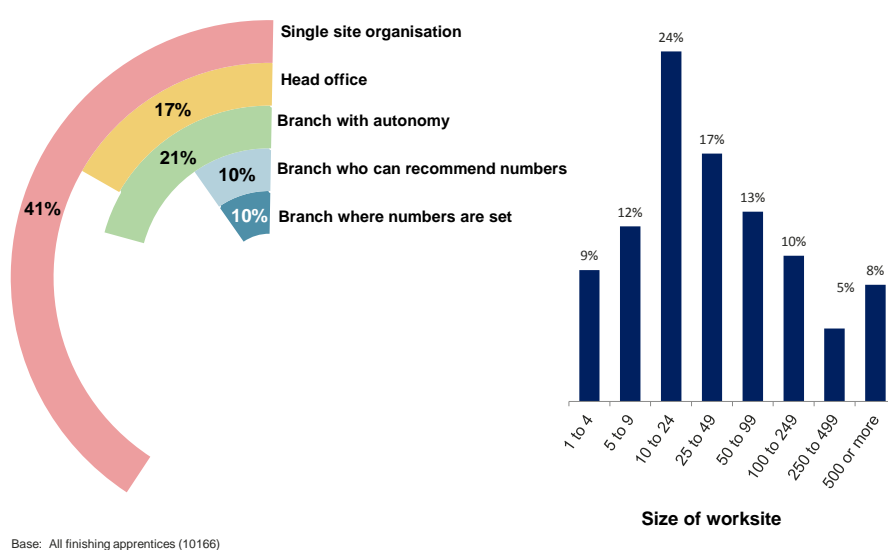
Of the 1,369¹¹ employers operating as a branch, half of them (51%) had complete autonomy over the number of apprentices they hired, 26% recommended the number which Head Offices then approved, and 19% had the numbers set by Head Office. There was little difference in autonomy levels, by main framework¹². However, a significantly higher proportion of employers identifying Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies as their main framework had their apprentice numbers set by Head Office (33%), whilst significantly more employers with a main framework of Retail & Commercial Enterprise had complete control (59%).

¹¹ Weighted base.

¹² The framework identified by employers as the framework most relevant to their business needs.

The 4,030 employers who took part in the survey accounted for a total of 10,166¹³ apprentices who finished training between 1st Aug 2012 and 31st March 2013¹⁴. Most of these (59%) were based at workplaces which were part of a larger organisation. Reflecting the fact that fewer Head Office took part in this year's survey, compared with 2013, fewer apprentices worked in a Head Office location and more worked in a branch or a single-site organisation this year, compared with 2013. The highest proportion of apprentices was based at worksites with 10 to 24 employees (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Distribution of apprentices, by organisation structure and size of worksite



2.5 The Apprenticeship offer

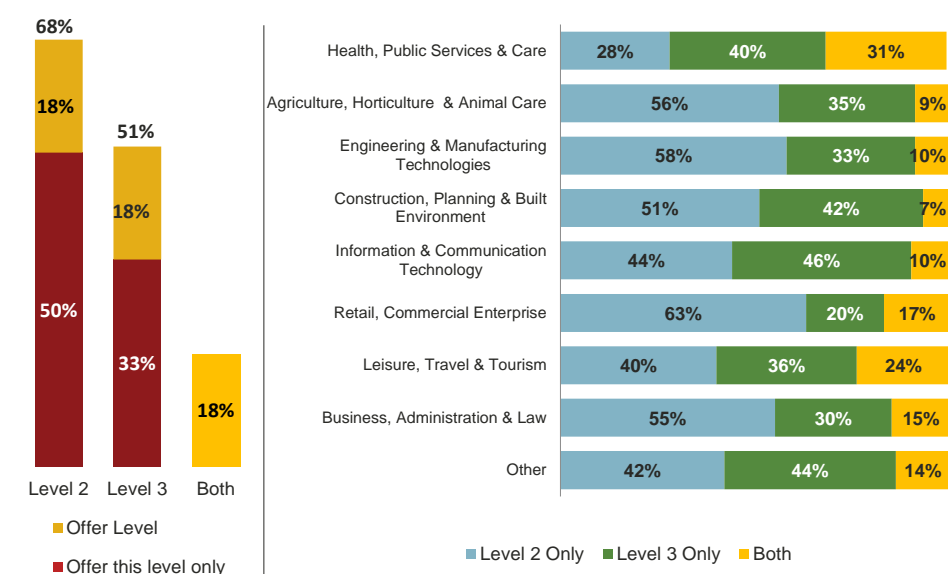
Level of Apprenticeship

The profile of Apprenticeship provision by level closely resembled that of last year. In line with 2013, 68% of employers provided Level 2 Apprenticeships (with 50% who *only* provided Level 2). The proportion providing Level 3 Apprenticeships increased (51% versus 48% last year), although a similar proportion to last year *only* provided Level 3 (33%, compared with 32% in 2013). The increase in the provision of Level 3 was driven by a small increase in employers who provided *both* Apprenticeships at both levels (18% compared with 16% last year).

¹³ As with last year, this figure is a weighted estimate used as a way of estimating national profiles.

¹⁴ Figures derived from the Individualised Learner Record

Figure 6: Provision of Apprenticeship Levels 2 and 3 across all employers and by main framework¹⁵



Base: All (4030); : Main Frameworks: Health Public Services & Care (856); Agriculture Horticulture Animal Care (99); Engineering Manufacturing Technologies (401); Construction Planning Built Environment (331); Information Communication Technology (83); Retail Commercial Enterprise (867); Leisure Travel Tourism (126); Business, Administration Law (1118); Other (149). Employer Size: 1-24 employees (2694); 25-99 (987); 100+ (327). Completions: All completed (3137); Some completions (353); No completions (415).

Looking across main framework, there were some significant variations. For example, employers providing Health, Public Services & Care (31%) or Leisure, Travel & Tourism (24%) were more likely to provide both levels, whilst those identifying Retail & Commercial Enterprise as their main framework were more likely to provide Level 2 only (63%).

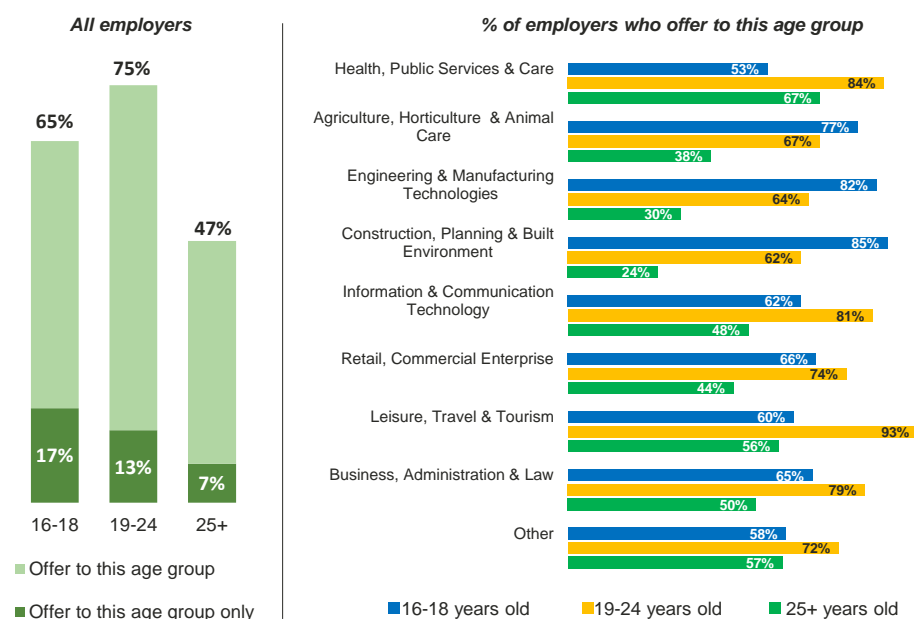
Age of apprentices

By age, the proportion of employers providing Apprenticeships to 16-18 year olds has declined compared with 2013, from 71% to 65%. This does not necessarily mean that fewer 16-18 year olds are doing Apprenticeships, just that relatively fewer employers are offering them to young school or college leavers, and relatively more to older ones aged 19-24 (75% compared with 73% last year) or aged 25 and above (47% versus 45% last year).

Nearly two-thirds of employers (63%) offered Apprenticeships to more than one age group. Employers who offered Apprenticeships to only one age group were more likely to focus their provision on young people aged 16-18 or 19-24 (Figure 7).

¹⁵ In last year's survey we looked at the provision of Apprenticeship levels across all frameworks. However, we have looked at main framework this year because it is likely that an employer's decision to offer different levels is driven by the framework which they consider most relevant to their business needs.

Figure 7: Provision of Apprenticeships to different age groups across all employers and all frameworks



Base: All (4030); All Frameworks (5159); Health Public Services & Care (1250); Agriculture Horticulture Animal Care (161); Engineering Manufacturing Technologies (481); Construction Planning Built Environment (310); Information Communication Technology (151); Retail Commercial Enterprise (896); Leisure Travel Tourism (180); Business, Administration Law (1554); Other (176)

Looking across all frameworks (Figure 7), employers providing the more ‘traditional’ subjects of Construction, Planning & Built Environment, and Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies were most likely to have taken on apprentices aged 16-18 years old. In contrast, far fewer employers who offered Health, Public Service & Care (53%) and Leisure, Travel and Tourism (60%) employed 16-18 year olds, favouring 19-24 year olds instead (84% and 93% respectively). Indeed, two-thirds (67%) of employers providing Apprenticeships in Health, Public Service & Care provided these to workers aged 25+.

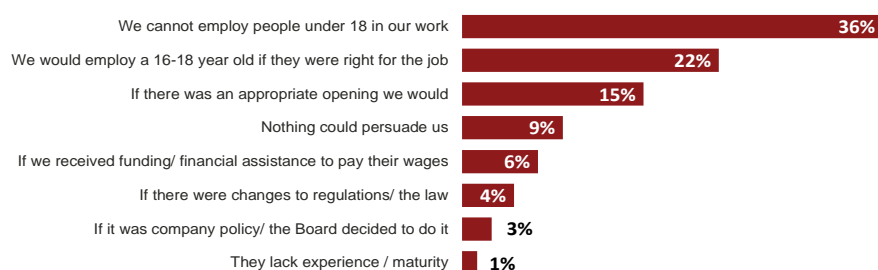
Those employers who said that they did not employ apprentices aged 16-18 were asked to say why not¹⁶ (Figure 8). Interestingly, reasons around regulations were more prevalent than last year, with more than a third (36%) stating that they could not employ under-18s¹⁷ in their line of work, compared with 29% previously. In particular, employers operating in the Health and Social Care sector were significantly more likely to say that they could not employ under-18s (47%), whilst those in Wholesale, Retail and Motor Trades were significantly less likely (9%). One in five employers (22%) said they would take on someone in that age group *if* they were right for the job, similar to 2013, which could imply that these employers view most younger workers as lacking the requisite skills. Although

¹⁶ This question took the form of an un-prompted multiple choice question.

¹⁷ There were no differences across employer awareness in the extent to which they stated this.

only 1% explicitly identified 16-18 year olds as being unsuitable as a whole, 9% stated that nothing could convince them to hire this age group.

Figure 8: Reasons for not providing Apprenticeships to 16-18 year olds

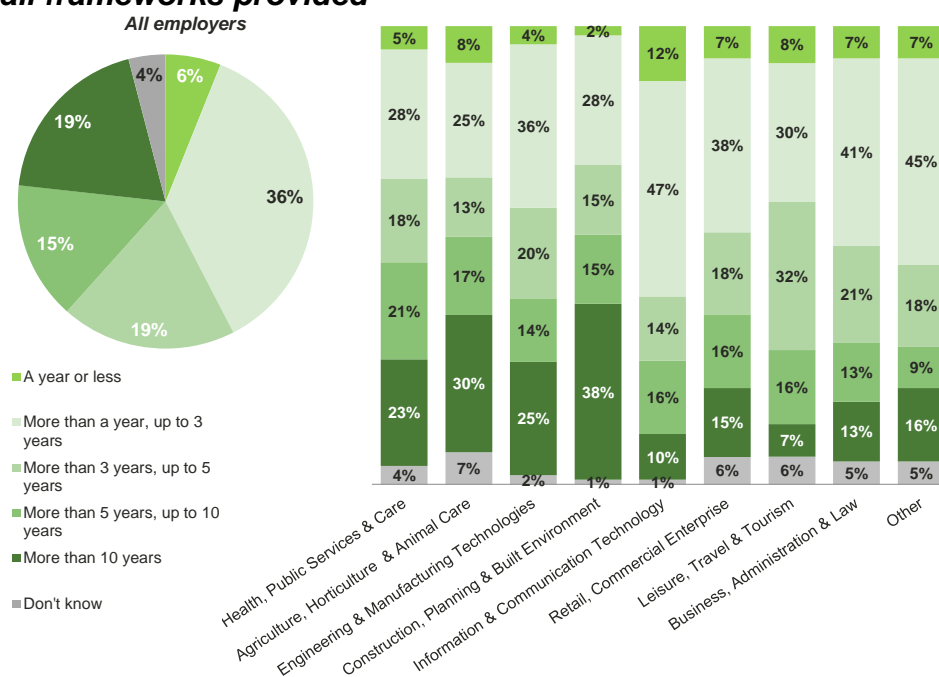


Base: All who do not hire Apprentices who are 16 to 18 years old (1386)

2.6 How long have employers been offering Apprenticeships?

As with last year's survey, 90% of employers had been offering Apprenticeships for more than a year, with 42% having offered them for less than three years (a small increase on last year's figure of 39%). Beyond this, employers were fairly evenly spread in terms of how long they had been offering Apprenticeships (Figure 9). One in three (34%) had been offering them for more than five years including 19% who were longstanding apprentice employers, offering them for over ten years.

Figure 9: Length of involvement with Apprenticeships across all employers and by all frameworks provided



Base: All (4030); All Frameworks (5159); Health Public Services & Care (1250); Agriculture Horticulture Animal Care (161); Engineering Manufacturing Technologies (481); Construction Planning Built Environment (310); Information Communication Technology (151); Retail Commercial Enterprise (896); Leisure Travel Tourism (180); Business, Administration Law (1554); Other (176)

Looking across all frameworks offered, Figure 9 reveals a similar pattern to last year, with employers split into two main groups¹⁸:

- The more 'traditional' frameworks (i.e. Construction, Planning & Built Environment, and Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies), alongside Health, Public Services & Care, and Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care, were more likely to have been offering Apprenticeships for longer than five years (around 40% to 50%).
- Employers offering the remaining frameworks tended to have been involved for less than five years with a minority of 25% to 30% providing them for longer.

¹⁸ Three groups were presented in last year's report, with employers providing Health, Public Services & Care, or Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care 'sitting between' the 'traditional' and 'newer' frameworks. This year, their figures more closely resemble those of the 'traditional' group.

3. Taking on apprentices

Key findings

Only six in ten employers (62%) were aware that the training they had provided was an Apprenticeship, which fell to around four in ten (37%) of those who had drawn their apprentices from existing staff (a reduction from 47% in 2013). There is continuing evidence that the concept of 'Apprenticeships' resonates less with those employers providing less traditional frameworks and to people in older age groups.

In terms of self-reported knowledge, seven in ten employers (71%) felt they knew a 'great deal' or 'fair amount' about Apprenticeships. Knowledge was highest among large workplaces with 100+ staff and, linked to this, among employers with higher volumes of apprentices who employed apprentices across multiple levels, Frameworks, and age ranges. There was also a strong link between knowledge of Apprenticeships and whether employers had influenced or wanted to influence the training (a key element of the current Apprenticeship reform programme).

Employers were split fairly evenly by the method that they used to recruit apprentices: 48% recruited from existing staff and 46% recruited externally with only a small proportion using both approaches. Recruitment approach is strongly influenced by framework(s) provided, with a clear distinction between employers providing 'traditional' Apprenticeships (who were more likely to recruit specifically) and those providing newer frameworks, who more likely to recruit from existing staff. Younger apprentices were more likely to have been recruited specifically, as were those working for smaller organisations and in workplaces with only one apprentice.

At workplaces where there was specific recruitment to Apprenticeship positions, the tendency was to use fixed-term contracts, and for apprentices to be recruited to new positions rather than as replacement demand for staff who were leaving. By contrast, the majority of employers who recruited internally said this was primarily to improve employees' skills in their existing jobs, rather than to prepare them for a new job role.

3.1 Recognition that employees are doing Apprenticeships

A longstanding challenge in Apprenticeship research with employers is that some do not recognise the training their staff are doing as an 'Apprenticeship', often because providers

may not use that terminology or may place greater emphasis on the technical component such as the NVQ. Apprenticeships are also strongly associated with young people and may not resonate as such with employers who are providing the training to older workers aged 25+. For this study, as in the 2013 survey, employers were sampled from official statistics so that we could be certain they had apprentices who finished training between August 2012 and March 2013. Like the 2013 survey, employers were not screened out if they did not recognise that they provided Apprenticeships¹⁹. This means that the findings are representative of the full spectrum of employer engagement and opinion.

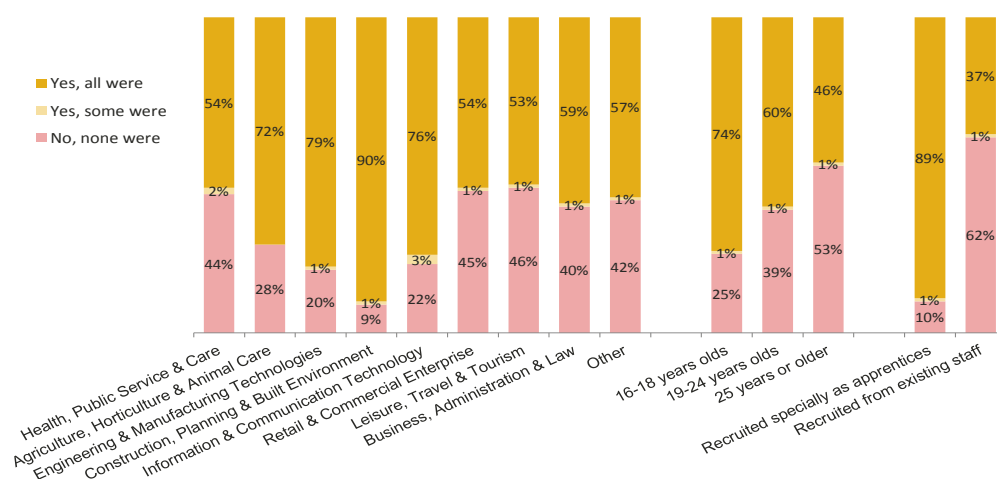
Six in ten employers (62%) were aware that the training they had provided was an Apprenticeship compared with 37% who were not. This clearly demonstrates the awareness gap among employers, which has grown since the 2013 survey when seven in ten were aware (70%) and three in ten were not (29%). The determinants of awareness are similar to those found in last year's survey, but have become more pronounced among employers who recruit apprentices from their existing staff. Less than four in ten of these (37%) recognised the training their staff received as an Apprenticeship (a decrease from 47% in 2013) compared with 89% of those who recruited apprentices externally (a much smaller, but still significant, decrease from 92% previously). This drop is likely to be exaggerated by small shifts in the profile this year which all combine in favour of groups who have lower recognition: employers offering Apprenticeships to existing staff aged over-25, Business, Administration & Law frameworks, and located in a branch as opposed to a Head Office or single-site organisation. Notably, employers in sites with 25-99 employees were less likely than smaller or larger establishments to be aware they had been delivering an Apprenticeship (52% compared with 65% among small sites employing fewer than 25 staff).

By frameworks provided (Figure 10), recognition remained highest among employers offering more 'traditional' frameworks such as 'Construction, Planning & the Built Environment' and 'Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies', and to a lesser extent ICT and Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care. These employers were all more likely to both recruit apprentices as external recruits and at a younger age. Conversely, employers offering Apprenticeships in most of the newer framework areas, and to existing employees (who also tended to be aged 25+) were much less likely to recognise the training as an

¹⁹ Unlike the Apprenticeship employer surveys prior to 2013, where there was a relatively high volume of screen outs.

Apprenticeship. This pattern is similar to 2013, but compared with then, awareness has fallen among employers providing frameworks in the two most common framework groupings ('Health, Public Service & Care', and 'Business, Administration & Law').

Figure 10: Employers' recognition that their apprentices were on an Apprenticeship, by Frameworks provided; age of apprentices; and recruitment approach



Base: All employers (4030)

Employers who did not recognise that their staff had done an Apprenticeship were asked to say which area of training they had been doing. The most common responses were training in Business, Administration and Law (mentioned by 69% of those who did not recognise they had been providing an Apprenticeship) followed by training in Retail and Commercial Enterprise (45%) and Health, Public Services and Care (33%).

3.2 Knowledge about Apprenticeships

Employers were asked how much they knew about Apprenticeships in general²⁰. The majority (71%) said they knew either 'a great deal' (23%) or 'a fair amount' (48%) with another quarter who knew 'just a little' (25%). Only four per cent said they had heard of Apprenticeships but knew nothing about them. As this is a self-reported question it is difficult to say whether employers actually do know as much as they claim, in particular when a substantial minority are not aware they have been employing an apprentice. Some

²⁰ Note that, to improve employers' comprehension, the wording of this question was changed in this year's survey compared with 2013 (when employers were asked about their knowledge of 'the government's Apprenticeship offer'). This means that it is not valid to compare the results of this question with 2013.

employers may still hold more ‘traditional’ perceptions of what an Apprenticeship entails and of who can be an apprentice.

Knowledge was highest among large workplaces with 100+ staff (where 90% knew a great deal or fair amount compared with 69% of workplaces with between 1 and 24 staff) and, linked to this, among employers with higher volumes of apprentices and who employed apprentices across multiple levels, frameworks, and age ranges. Notably there was no difference according to the overall size of the organisation: the differences by workplace size related more to whether or not the business was single-site or a branch of a larger business, with branches less likely to say they knew a great deal or fair amount (66%) compared with either single sites (72%) or Head Offices (85%). Knowledge was particularly low among employers who only offered Apprenticeships to staff aged 25+, where just 42% knew a great deal or a fair amount about them.

As we might expect there was a strong link between employers’ knowledge about Apprenticeships and whether they were aware of what they were providing. Four in five (82%) who were aware they were providing Apprenticeships knew a great deal or fair amount about them, compared with just half of those who did not recognise their training as an Apprenticeship (52%).

There was also a strong link between knowledge of Apprenticeships and whether employers had influenced or wanted to influence the training (a key element of the current Apprenticeship reform programme). Employers who had no influence and did not want any influence were less likely to say they knew a great deal or a fair amount about Apprenticeships (60%) than those who had exerted influence both before and during the training (77%), or who had some influence either before or during, and wanted more (78%).

3.3 Information, support and guidance available

Almost three-quarters (73%) of employers felt there was sufficient information, support and guidance available to employers interested in offering Apprenticeships, up from 68% in 2013. One-quarter (24%) thought the information and support available was insufficient, compared with 29% previously. Encouragingly for BIS and the SFA, this increase is apparent across all organisation sizes, although the gap between employers with fewer than 25 staff (where 70% now think there is sufficient information and support) and those

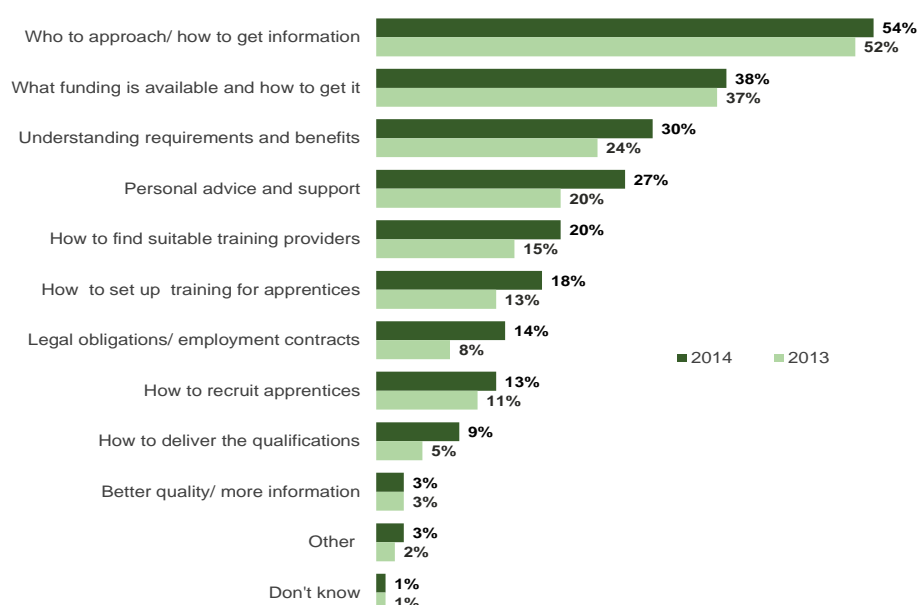
with 100+ staff (79%) remains similar. The proportion who feel that information and support is lacking has fallen to 26% of small employers (down from 35% in 2013) and 19% of medium-sized ones (down from 24% in 2013). However, single-site organisations remain less likely than others to say that information is sufficient (68%) and their view has improved less notably than in Head Offices. Together with the consistent gap between large and small employers, this suggests that future provision still needs to engage better with small organisations.

Table 1: Whether there is sufficient information, support and guidance available to employers interested in offering Apprenticeships

	Base	Yes, sufficient	No, insufficient	Don't know
Frameworks provided				
Health, Public Services & Care	1,250	77%	21%	2%
Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care	161	66%	30%	5%
Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies	481	71%	24%	5%
Construction, Planning & Built Environment	310	68%	27%	5%
Information & Communication Technology	151	64%	33%	4%
Retail & Commercial Enterprise	896	73%	23%	3%
Leisure, Travel & Tourism	180	72%	20%	8%
Business, Administration & Law	1,554	76%	21%	3%
Other	176	65%	31%	4%
Size of organisation				
1-24 employees		70%	26%	3%
25-99 employees		76%	21%	3%
100+ employees		85%	13%	3%
Site function				
Only site in organisation	1,797	68%	29%	3%
Head office with sites	615	80%	17%	3%
Branch of org. with sites	1,607	78%	18%	5%
Number of years involved				
Up to 3	1,545	69%	27%	3%
3-10 years	1,482	76%	22%	2%
More than 10 years	861	75%	22%	3%
Total	4,030			

Employers who felt there was insufficient information, advice or support available would most welcome further guidance on 'who to approach and how to get information', 'what funding is available', 'understanding the requirements and benefits' of Apprenticeships, and 'personal advice and support' (Figure 11). These findings are very much in line with 2013, although demand for more personal advice and support, and for information on legal obligations/ employment contracts, has both increased significantly since last year.

Figure 11: Information, support and guidance that is missing, 2014 and 2013



Base: All who say there is not sufficient information, 2014 (873) and 2013 (989)

There were few differences by main framework. However, among those who felt there was insufficient information available, employers whose main framework was 'Health, Public Service and Care' were more likely to want additional support on understanding the requirements and benefits of an Apprenticeship (39% compared with 30% overall). Employers whose main framework was Agriculture, Horticulture or Animal Care were more likely to want advice on how to recruit apprentices (30% compared with 13% overall), perhaps reflecting greater recruitment problems in that type of work.

3.4 Recruitment patterns

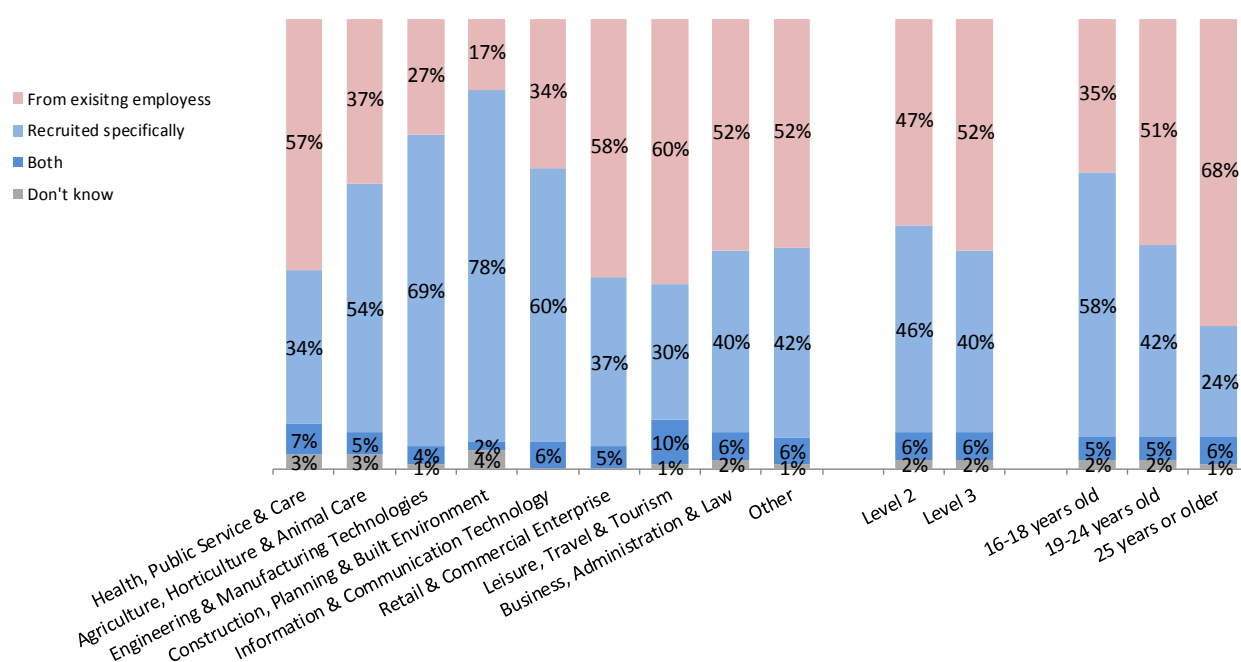
Internal and external recruitment

Apprentices can either be existing employees, or recruited specifically to an Apprenticeship position. Employers were asked about the apprentices who finished training between August 2012 and March 2013. As in 2013 there was a fairly even balance

between those who had recruited specifically for the Apprenticeship (46%) and those who reported the apprentice was already an existing member of staff (48%). As before, employers tended to use one method or the other – just 4% had used both.

As in 2013, employers who provided the more ‘traditional’ frameworks of ‘Construction, Planning & the Built Environment’ and ‘Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies’ were more likely to have recruited their apprentices externally, alongside, to a lesser extent, ICT and Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care (Figure 12). In line with last year’s survey, there is a much greater focus on recruiting young people to a specific Apprenticeship position, compared with older workers (who are more likely to be existing members of staff). For many young people aged 16 – 18 in particular, the Apprenticeship is likely to be their first job after leaving full-time education.

Figure 12: Recruitment type by frameworks provided, level and age of apprentices



Base: All

Recruitment patterns by organisation size vary in the same ways as they did in 2013. Small employers with fewer than 25 staff were more likely to have just recruited their apprentice(s) externally (61%) while large organisations with 100+ staff were more likely to have only recruited internally (64%). This is also linked to sector, with internal recruitment more prevalent in sectors which tend to include larger establishments, including accommodation and food (77%), health and social care (60%) and wholesale, retail and

motor trades (57%). As in 2013, organisations with only one apprentice were more likely to have taken them on as specific new recruits (54%). In contrast, the majority of those with multiple apprentices had recruited them from within their existing workforce (peaking among those with between three and nine apprentices, at 57%), or to have used both internal and external approaches (highest among those with ten or more apprentices, at 23%).

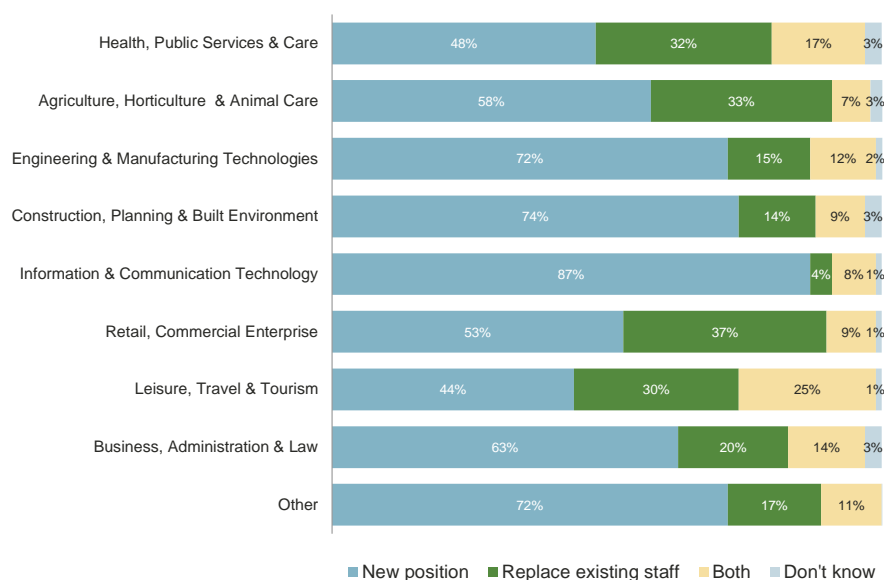
The use of fixed-term contracts

In total, half of all employers (50%) had recruited at least one apprentice externally, and of these, 72% employed their apprentice(s) on a fixed-term contract for the period of the training, similar to 2013. Fixed term contracts were most prevalent among employers offering the newer, high-growth frameworks in Health, Public Service and Care (80%) or Retail and Commercial Enterprise (79%). Conversely they were less common among employers offering Apprenticeships in 'traditional' areas such as Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies (56%) or Construction, Planning and the Built Environment (66%).

New positions or replacement demand?

Employers who had recruited their apprentices externally were also asked whether they had done so to replace existing members of staff, or to fill new positions. Most (74%) recruited external apprentices to fill newly created posts, rather than as direct replacements for staff who had left or were approaching retirement (35%). Recruiting apprentices to newly created posts, rather than to meet replacement demands within the existing workforce, was more common among employers offering the 'traditional' frameworks, as well as those offering frameworks in Information and Communication Technology and 'other' subjects (Figure 13 overleaf).

Figure 13: Whether external apprentice recruitment was to fill a new position or to replace existing staff



Base: All employers who recruited apprentices externally (1,936)

Among employers who recruited apprentices externally, those who recruited 16 – 18 year olds (78%) and who started offering Apprenticeships within the past three years (84%) were more likely than others to have created new positions for their apprentices rather than taking them on as replacements for existing staff.

A central platform of the Apprenticeship reforms being implemented from 2014 onwards is that Apprenticeships will still be available to new and existing employees, but should only be offered to the latter where substantial new learning is required. Employers who provided Apprenticeships to existing staff were asked to what extent this was to prepare for a new job role, to improve skills in the current job, or both. The majority (85%) said it was to improve employees' skills in their existing jobs, with just four per cent who said it was to prepare for a new job role, and 11% who were motivated by both. This did not differ significantly by frameworks offered, with the exception that employers offering frameworks in Construction, Planning & the Built Environment to existing staff were more likely than others to say this was for a new job role (23%).

Using Apprenticeships to upskill existing staff was more common among employers who were not aware they were providing Apprenticeships (88%, compared with 79% of those who were aware) and among employers who had chosen to provide Apprenticeships

because they cost less or were free compared with other forms of training (88%, compared with around three-quarters of those motivated by more positive reasons).

4. Employer influence on and involvement in Apprenticeship delivery

Key findings

At the majority of workplaces (71%) Apprenticeship training is delivered jointly by the provider and the employer (while in nearly all other cases it is delivered only by the training provider). The proportion of workplaces where training is only delivered by a provider has increased slightly since last year, from 20% to 23%.

Like last year, only half of employers (49%) who had received provider training said they were able to influence the structure, content, delivery and duration of the Apprenticeship **before** it started, while 58% said they were able to influence the training **during** the Apprenticeship. Larger workplaces and those who knew more about Apprenticeships were more likely to have influenced the training they received.

Around one third of employers who did not get any influence said they wanted some (35%) an increase since 2013 (29%). Smaller workplaces were more likely than larger ones to have wanted influence but not been able to get it. In contrast, 63% of employers who had no influence said that they did not want any. Overall, this equates to around a quarter of all employers (26%) saying they do not have any influence and do not want any.

Just over a quarter of all employers (28%) said that they would have liked to have changed something about the content, structure, delivery or duration of their Apprenticeship training. Of these, 60% had *asked* the training provider to make changes but 40% had not. Multivariate analysis demonstrated that agreement with the statements *“We know who to speak to about making changes to the Apprenticeship training we get”* and *“Our training provider would adapt the Apprenticeship if we asked them to”* was most predictive of employers’ decisions to *ask* for change if they wanted it. This underlines the importance of the employer-provider relationship, as well as providers’ willingness to be flexible, in order for employers to exert influence.

Drawing on the recommendations of the Richard Review, key to the Government's 'Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan' is a more employer-driven approach in which employers 'take ownership' of the processes through which Apprenticeships are designed, delivered, and assessed. This was a key focus of this year's survey and this chapter explores employers' involvement and influence in Apprenticeship training.

4.1 Employers' and providers' involvement in Apprenticeship delivery and assessment

Training delivery

Nearly three-quarters (74%) of employers are involved in delivering training themselves (a small but significant drop since last year - 77%). Only 3% of employers said that they solely provided the training (with no delivery from the provider). Just like last year, the vast majority of employers (95%) engaged with a training provider in some way²¹. For seven out of ten employers (71%), training was delivered by both provider and employer (fewer than last year – 75%). In contrast, 23% of employers said that training was delivered solely by the provider – a small but significant increase on last year (20%). These patterns are outlined in Figure 14.

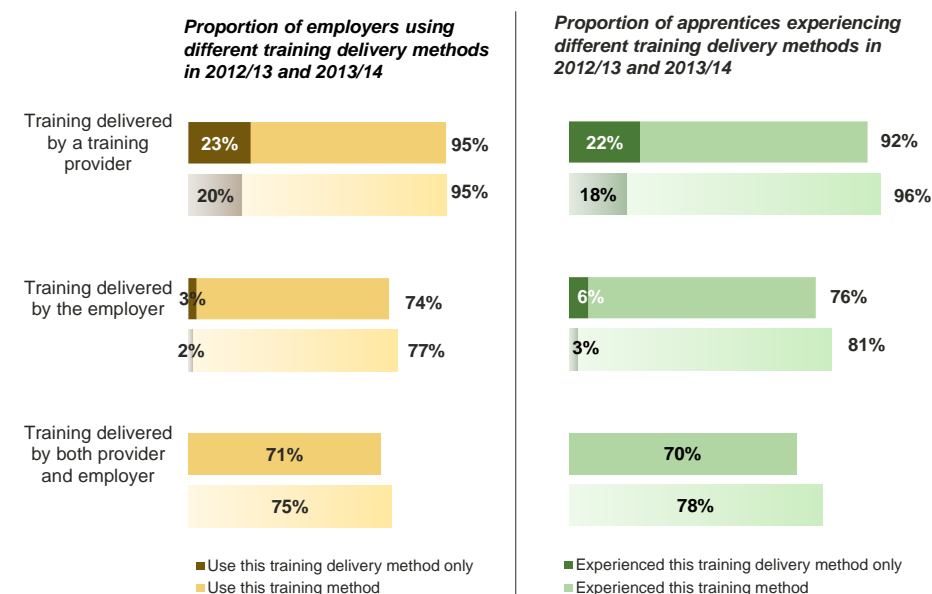
This figure also shows the profile of apprentices^{22,23} who received training via different routes, which closely resembles the employer profile. Nine in ten apprentices received training from a provider, with 22% *only* receiving this mode of delivery. Just over three quarters (76%) received training from their employer, with 6% who received all their training from their employer. Overall, the majority (70%) of apprentices received training from *both* their employer and a training provider. Since 2012/13, the apprentice training profile has exhibited similar changes as for employers (e.g. relatively fewer employers are offering both types of training and relatively fewer apprentices are experiencing both types of training).

²¹ 89 respondents indicated that neither the training provider *nor* the employer delivered the training. These outliers have been omitted from the following charts.

²² The data on apprentice numbers is taken directly from the Individualised Learner Record.

²³ As with last year, these proportions are based on weighted volumes of apprentices

Figure 14: Proportion of employers and their apprentices utilising and experiencing different methods of training provision

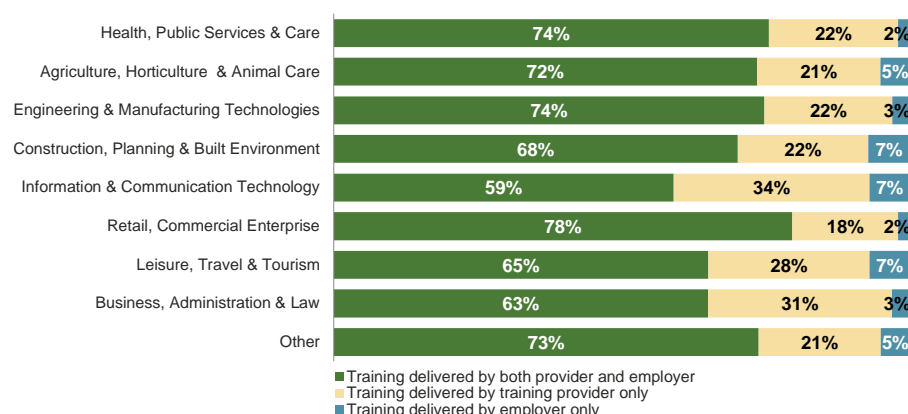


Bars with gradient shading are data from 2012/13 survey

Base: All employers 2013-14 (4030); All employers 2012-13 (4009); No. of apprentices finishing training 2013-14 (26,837); No. of apprentices finishing training 2012-13 (40,447)

Looking at the mode of training delivery across employers' main framework (Figure 15), there are few differences except for the fact that having training providers undertake all training was more common among employers whose main frameworks were Information & Communication Technology (34%), Leisure, Travel & Tourism (28%), or Business, Administration & Law (31%).

Figure 15: Profile of training provision by main framework



Base: Main Framework: Health Public Services & Care (881); Agriculture Horticulture Animal Care (103); Engineering Manufacturing Technologies (421); Construction Planning Built Environment (345); Information Communication Technology (106); Retail Commercial Enterprise (934); Leisure Travel Tourism (130); Business, Administration Law (1363); Other (158).

Beyond main framework, and as can be seen in Table 2, there was little difference in the pattern of training delivery by the size of the worksite or the number of apprentices who finished training.

Table 2: Method of training delivery by workplace size and number of apprentices

	Base	Training Provider only	Training Provider		Employer only	Employer	Both Training Provider and Employer
Size of worksite							
1-24 employees	2,694	23%	96%		3%	76%	73%
25- 99 employees	987	27%	94%		3%	70%	67%
100+ employees	327	26%	95%		3%	73%	69%
Total (Excluding 'Don't knows' and 'Refusals' for worksite size)	4,008	24%	95%		3%	74%	71%
Number of apprentices							
1 apprentice	2,432	25%	95%		4%	74%	70%
2 apprentices	729	23%	95%		3%	75%	72%
3-10 apprentices	734	24%	96%		3%	75%	72%
More than 10 apprentices	135	24%	97%		2%	75%	73%
Total	4,030	24%	95%		3%	74%	71%

Assessment

Shifting focus to assessment, rather than training delivery, almost all employers (97%) indicated that the Apprenticeship assessments were conducted by a training provider, in line with last year. Of the small group of employers who stated that the assessment was *not* done by a training provider, 64% said that their own staff had conducted the assessment²⁴.

4.2 Employers' influence on Apprenticeship training

In last year's survey we asked employers if they had been able to *influence the structure, content, delivery and duration* of the Apprenticeship – both **before** and **during** the training. These issues are of particular policy interest in the light of reforms to the Apprenticeship

²⁴ Of the remaining employers 35% said that their own staff did not conduct the assessment and 1% did not know. However, the survey did not ask these employers who had conducted the assessment.

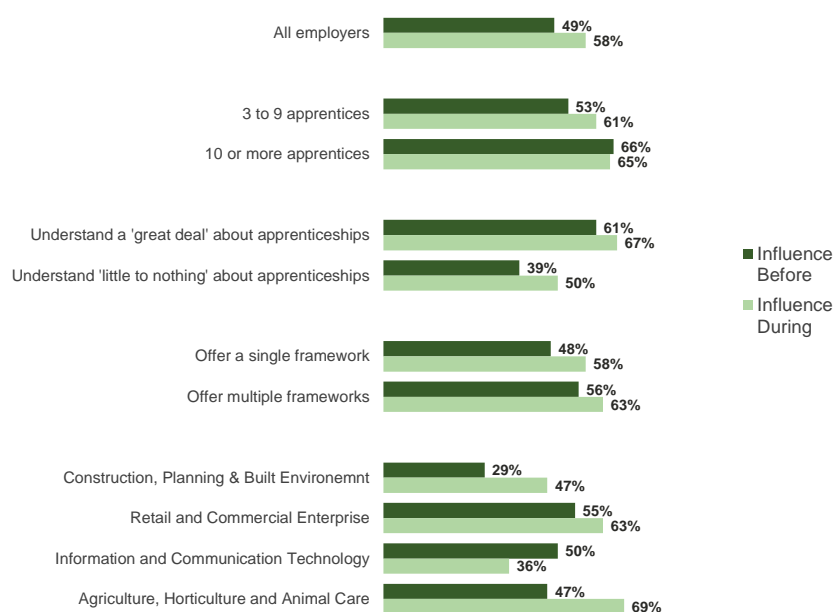
system which seek to provide employers with greater opportunity to shape the design and delivery of Apprenticeships.

Having influence

Almost identical to last year, 49% of apprentice employers were able to influence the training before it started, whilst 58% were able to influence it during. A similar proportion of employers to last year were able to influence both before *and* during (42%), but there was a small but statistically significant drop in the proportion who were able to influence *either* before or after (63% this year compared with 67% last year).

As with last year, there were some significant variations by subgroups, and these are outlined in Figure 16:

Figure 16: Significant differences in employer influence between subgroups



Base: All (4030); 3-9 apprentices (1609); 10+ apprentices (676); Understand a great deal (1103); Understand a fair amount (1867); Single Framework (2948); Multiple Frameworks (1082); Main Frameworks - Agriculture Horticulture Animal Care (103); Construction Planning Built Environment (345); Information Communication Technology (106); Retail Commercial Enterprise (934).

Employers who had higher numbers of apprentices were statistically more likely than lower-volume ones to have influence, before or after the training started. More than half of those with 3-9 (53%) and 10+ (66%) apprentices said they had influence *before* the training, and this pattern was mirrored *during* the Apprenticeship training (61% and 65% respectively). One possible explanation to account for this difference is that employers with higher numbers of apprentices might have more capacity and greater leverage with their training provider. Likewise, employers who offered multiple frameworks were also more likely to be able to influence the Apprenticeship before or during training. Those who

offered multiple frameworks generally had more apprentices, and larger employers (with 100+ employees) were significantly more likely to influence the training before (66%) or after (67%) it started.

An alternative explanation for why employers do or do not exert influence could be their level of understanding and knowledge of Apprenticeships. For example, a higher level of knowledge about Apprenticeships was associated with increased levels of influence *before* the training. Those employers who knew a ‘great deal’ were significantly more likely to be able to influence the Apprenticeship training than those employers with ‘little to no understanding’ both before (61% compared with 39%) and during (67% compared with 50%). This observation supports the previous qualitative work undertaken by Ipsos MORI²⁵ in which a key barrier to employer influence was lack of awareness about how Apprenticeships were delivered.

Looking at specific sector subject areas, employers who identified their main Apprenticeship framework as Construction, Planning & Built Environment were less likely to have influence before (29%) and during (47%) training. In contrast, those who identified Retail & Commercial Enterprise as their main framework reported higher levels of influence before and during training.

Wanting influence

As with last year, employers who had limited influence (those who said they had not been able to influence training either before *or* after it started) were asked if they had wanted any influence over the training.

Of these, 35% said that they had wanted influence: a significant increase over last year (29%). There was little difference in the desire for influence across frameworks. Notably, smaller worksites (with 1-24 employees) were more likely to have wanted influence (37% compared with 29% of worksites with 25+ employees). Like last year, single site organisations were more likely to want influence (41%) compared with branches (24%). Similarly, those who only recruited external apprentices wanted more influence (42%), than those who provided Apprenticeships to existing staff (28%).

²⁵ Ipsos MORI (2014), Employer Influence on Apprenticeships, *BIS Research Paper 162*. London: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/284766/bis-14-601-employer-influence-on-apprenticeships.pdf

Understanding and awareness were also associated with the desire for influence. Forty-four per cent of those who understood a 'great deal' about Apprenticeships wanted influence, whilst only 26% of those who knew 'little to nothing' wanted influence. These figures were reflected in the extent to which employers were aware that their apprentices had been doing an Apprenticeship. Forty-two per cent of employers who knew *all* their apprentices were on an Apprenticeship wanted influence, but this dropped to 25% of those who did not recognise that any were. This latter observation presents a seemingly paradoxical situation in which a proportion of respondents (10% of all employers) ostensibly wanted influence over a programme they did not know they had. One explanation for this is that whilst these employers did not know that their employees were on an Apprenticeship, they *were* aware that they were engaged in training and wanted more influence over that.

Last year, a five-fold typology was developed based on the extent to which employers had and wanted influence, which categorised employers as those who had:

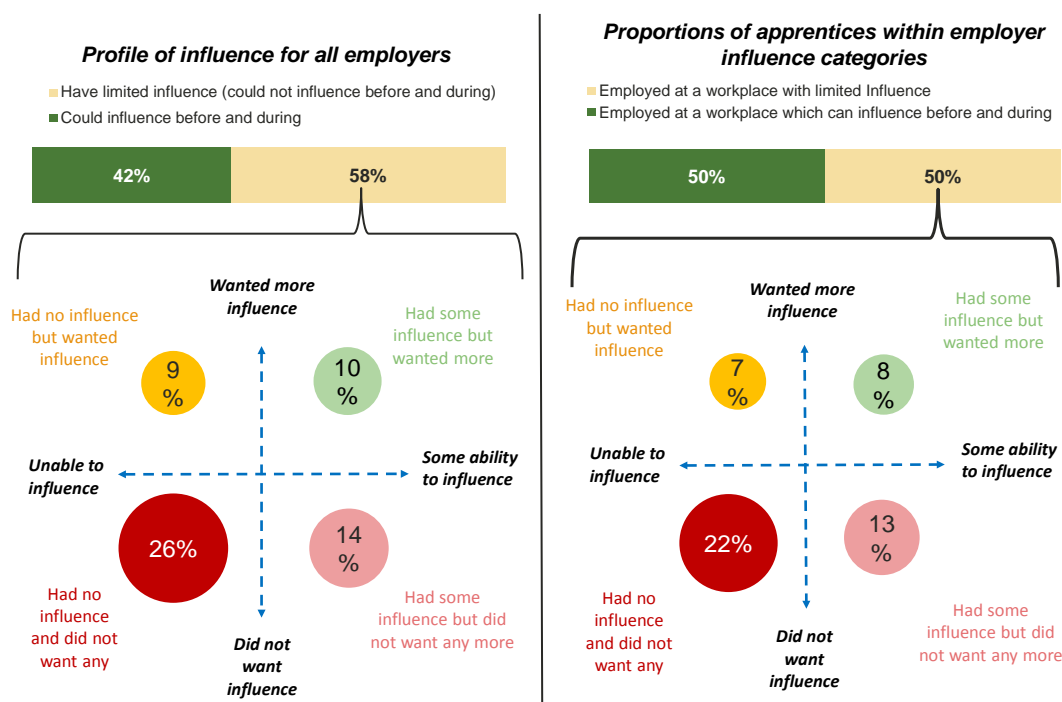
- Influenced Apprenticeship training before *and* after.
- Influenced training either before or after **and** wanted more influence
- Influenced training either before or after **and did not** want more influence
- Had no influence but wanted influence
- Did not influence and did not want influence

The proportions of employers falling into each category were very similar to last year²⁶, outlined in Figure 17 overleaf. Compared to last year there were some small, but statistically significant changes in the direction towards wanting *more* influence. This year, significantly more (9%) said that they 'had no influence but wanted influence' compared with last year (7%). Likewise, there was a small, but statistically significant decrease in the amount who said that they 'had influence, but did *not* want influence' (17% to 14%). However, 40% of all employers still indicate that they do not want to have any influence over Apprenticeship training. These employers will be of key interest with the move towards more employer-led Apprenticeships.

²⁶ As with last year, in this segmentation a 'Don't know' is treated as a 'No' so that all employers can be included.

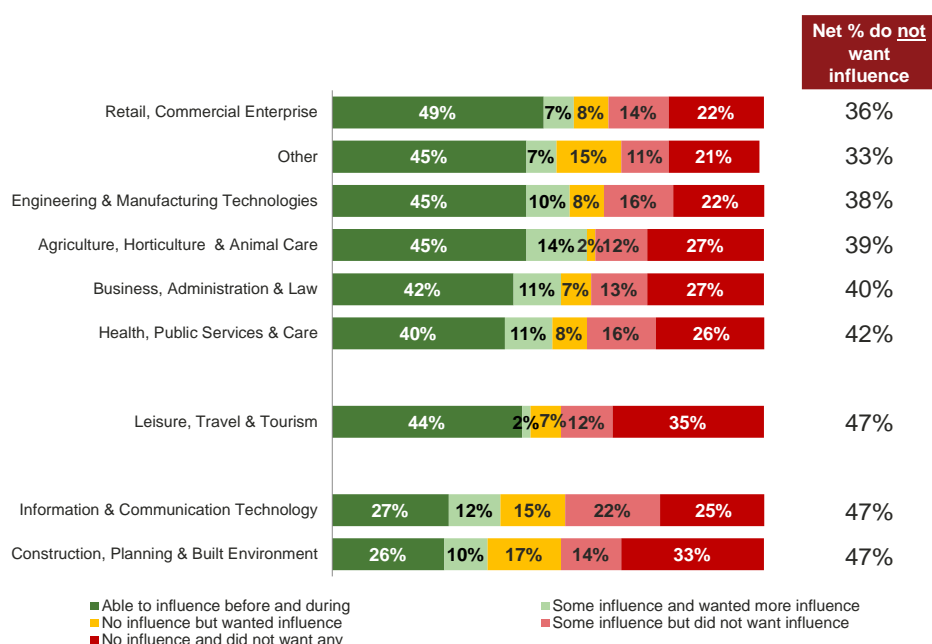
Figure 17 also outlines the proportions of apprentices covered by each employer category. Whilst half of apprentices are based with an employer who has influence before *and* during, just over a third are with employers who appeared to be less engaged and indicated that they either had no influence and did not want any (22%), or that they had some influence but did not want any more (13%).

Figure 17: Profile of employers and apprentices by influence typology²⁷



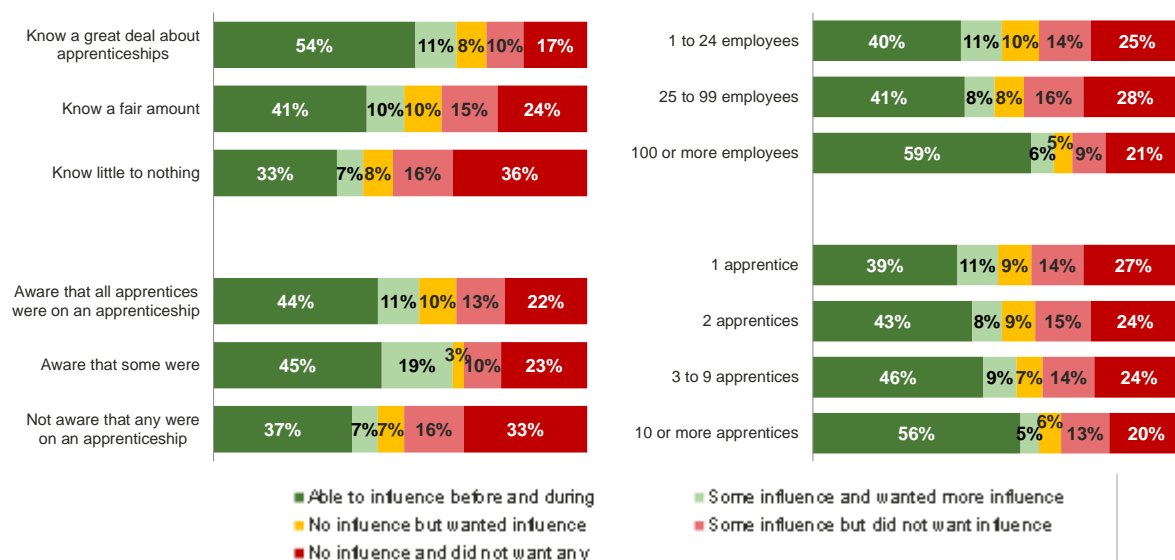
Exploring the five-fold influence typology in more detail, Figure 18 (overleaf) shows that there are some differences by main framework area. The three frameworks with the highest proportions of employers saying they do *not* want any more influence are Information & Communication Technology (47%), Construction, Planning & Built Environment (47%), and Leisure, Travel & Tourism (47%). However, unlike the latter framework, the two former frameworks also have statistically fewer employers who said they had any influence before *and* during the Apprenticeship (27% and 26% respectively).

²⁷ The 'limited influence' category in the bar covers the four employer influence categories presented by the circles.

Figure 18: Profile of influence typologies by main framework

Base: Main Framework - Health Public Services & Care (881); Agriculture Horticulture Animal Care (103); Engineering Manufacturing Technologies (421); Construction Planning Built Environment (345); Information Communication Technology (106); Retail Commercial Enterprise (934); Leisure Travel Tourism (130); Business, Administration Law (1363); Other (158).

Attitudinally speaking, employers with lower levels of understanding and awareness of Apprenticeships are less likely to want to influence their Apprenticeship training (Figure 19). In terms of firmographic variations, there is less difference by site function, but single sites want more influence than branches of multi-site organisations. This is likely to be related to having greater 'ownership' of the training. Likewise, larger sites, and those with more apprentices are likely to have had influence before *and* during, and are less likely to be in a position of *wanting* more influence compared to worksites with 1-24 employees and those with fewer apprentices. Again, as mentioned earlier, this is potentially because their greater size and volume of apprentices means that they carry more 'weight' with providers, or that providers may be more responsive to their needs.

Figure 19: Profile of influence typology by various sub-groups

Base: Know a great deal (1103); know a fair amount (1867); know little to nothing (1057); Aware all (2410); Aware some (103); Aware none (1517); 1-24 employees (1996); 25-99 employees (1318); 100+ employees (679); 1 apprentice (866); 2 apprentices (879); 3-9 apprentices (1609); 10+ apprentices (676)

4.3 What drives employer involvement in the Apprenticeship training they are offered?

Following last year's survey, the majority of employers were split between either wanting more influence or not wanting any, and this prompted follow-up qualitative research to explore the views of these employers. The findings from this follow-up research have been reported elsewhere²⁸, but they suggested a range of barriers and drivers which might shape employers' desire and ability to influence Apprenticeship training.

One of the barriers articulated by employers was perceived reluctance by their training provider to make changes to the training offer. Therefore, this year's survey attempted to quantify the extent to which employers had engaged in the key 'influencing behaviour' of asking their training provider to "change any aspects of the Apprenticeship training to better meet the needs" of the employers' business.

Wanting and asking for changes to Apprenticeship training

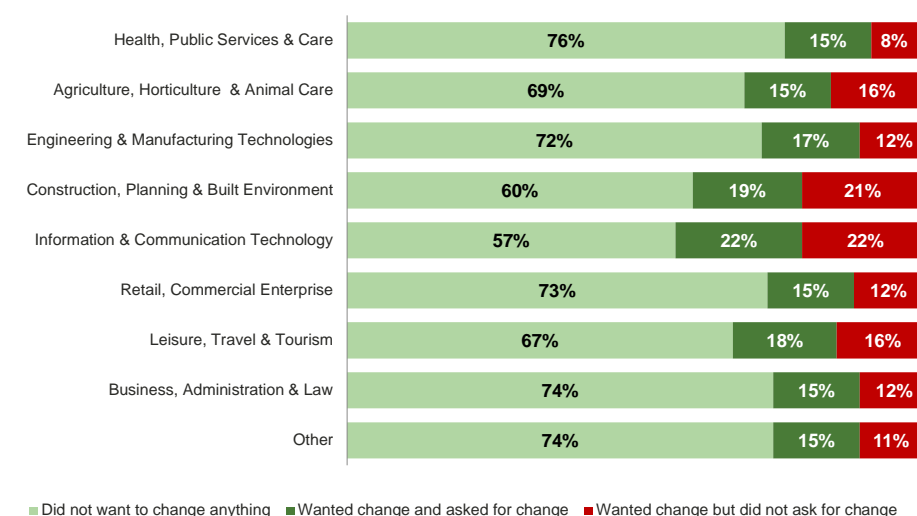
Whilst the majority (66%) of employers indicated that they were *able* to influence either **before** or **during** training (and 19% said that they would have liked more influence) only 28% of employers said that they actually would have liked to have changed something

²⁸ Ipsos MORI (2014), Employer Influence on Apprenticeships, *BIS Research Paper 162*. London: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/284766/bis-14-601-employer-influence-on-apprenticeships.pdf

about the content, structure, delivery or duration of the training. Of these employers, 60% had asked the training provider to make changes whilst 40% did not (which represented 16% and 12% of the total sample respectively).

There were differences when looking across main framework area (Figure 20). Employers who identified Health, Public Services & Care as their main framework were least likely to have wanted to change anything about the Apprenticeship training, with 76% not wanting to change anything. In contrast, those who identified Construction, Planning & Environment, or Information & Communication Technology as their main frameworks were most likely to have wanted to change something about the training (40% and 43% respectively). There was little variation in terms of size of worksite or volume of apprentices.

Figure 20: Employers' desire to want and ask for change, by main framework



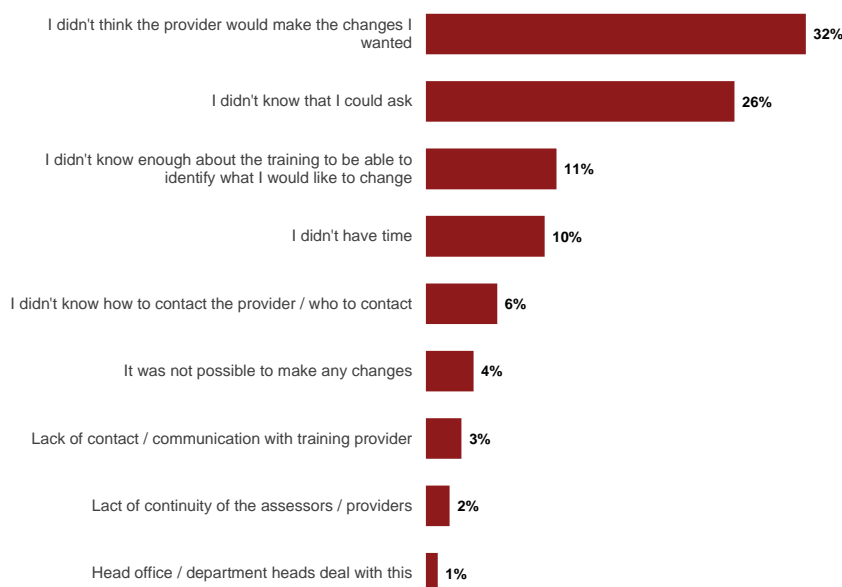
Base: Main Framework - Health Public Services & Care (881); Agriculture Horticulture Animal Care (103); Engineering Manufacturing Technologies (421); Construction Planning Built Environment (345); Information Communication Technology (106); Retail Commercial Enterprise (934); Leisure Travel Tourism (130); Business, Administration Law (1363); Other (158).

Reasons for not asking for change, when change was desired

Those employers who wanted change but did not ask for it were questioned as to why not (Figure 21). The most common reason was that they did not think their provider would make the changes (32%). This barrier, along with 'lack of contact' (3%), and 'lack of continuity' (2%) could be conceptualised as employers perceiving a lack of an *opportunity* to elicit change. In contrast, reasons such as not knowing who to ask (26%), not knowing enough about the training (11%), or not knowing who to contact (6%) could be conceptualised as employers perceiving that they lacked the *capability* to elicit change. Finally, the reasons of not having the time (10%) and Head Office dealing with it (1%)

could be understood as *motivational* barriers to employers asking for change. This conceptual framework is explored in greater detail in the following section.

Figure 21: Reasons for not asking the training provider to change anything, among employers who wanted change



Base: All who wanted change but did not ask (428)

Attitudes towards influencing training

New to this year's survey, a series of attitudinal questions was asked to all respondents to further explore their desire and perceived ability to ask for changes. The attitudinal statements were informed by a behavioural theoretical framework called COM-B, which presents 'Capability', 'Opportunity' and 'Motivation' as key drivers of any behaviour²⁹. The new statements (and how they relate to the COM-B framework) were³⁰:

Capability:

- *"We know who to speak to about making changes to the Apprenticeship training we get"*

²⁹ Michie et al. (2011) 'The behaviour change wheel: A new method for characterising and designing behaviour change interventions,' *Implementation Science* 6:42. <http://www.implementationscience.com/content/6/1/42>

³⁰ Two statements were chosen to explore drivers/barriers around 'Opportunity' and 'Motivation' as the qualitative research into employer influence had highlighted the importance of these.

Opportunity

- *“If we were unhappy with the Apprenticeship training we get, we could easily switch to a different training provider”*
- *“Our training provider would adapt the Apprenticeship if we asked them to”*

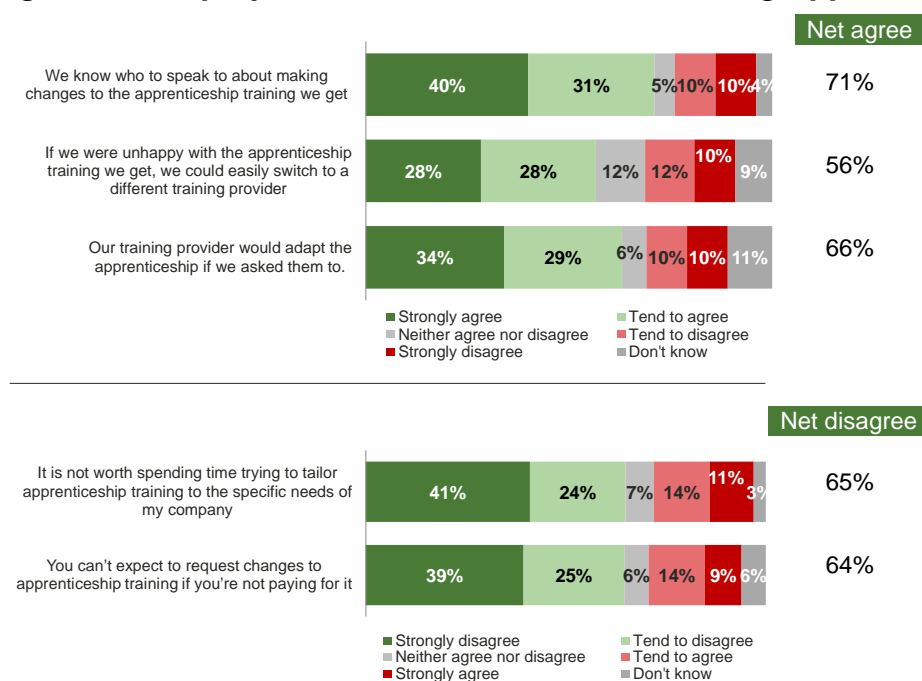
Motivation

- *“It is not worth spending time trying to tailor Apprenticeship training to the specific needs of my company”*
- *“You can’t expect to request changes to Apprenticeship training if you’re not paying for it”³¹*

Employers’ responses suggested that a key barrier to influencing Apprenticeship training is the sense that they do not have the ‘*opportunity*’ to easily switch to an alternative provider (with only 56% of employers agreeing that they could). In contrast, seven out of ten employers indicated that they had the ‘*capability*’ to identify who they need to speak to if they wanted to ask about making changes. For the other three statements, around two-thirds of employers indicated that they were motivated to request changes, and felt that their training provider would be amenable to adapting the training if asked (Figure 22).

Responses to these questions varied by a number of factors, although some broad patterns did emerge. On the whole, larger worksites were significantly more likely to agree that they had influence, and significantly more motivated to exercise influence. A similar pattern was found for employers with more apprentices, greater understanding, more completions, and those offering more than one framework.

³¹ It should be noted that many employers do pay for Apprenticeship training. This statement was designed to elicit a response based on employers’ general attitudes towards the notion of paying for training and wanting influence over it in return.

Figure 22: Employers' attitudes towards influencing Apprenticeship training

The following sections present a selection of subgroup variations for each statement:

“We know who to speak to about making changes to the Apprenticeship training we get”

- Relative to the national profile (where 71% of apprentice employers agreed), agreement was higher among:
 - Larger worksites with 100+ employees (85%).
 - Non-profit seeking organisations (77%).
 - Employers whose main framework areas were Health, Public Service & Care, or Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies (76% and 77% respectively)
- Relative to the national profile (20%), there was more disagreement from:
 - Those who had *no* completions (30%).
 - Those with little to no understanding of Apprenticeships (25%).
 - Employers citing Construction, Planning & Built Environment, and Information & Communication Technology as their main framework (27% and 37% disagreed, respectively).

“If we were unhappy with the Apprenticeship training we get, we could easily switch to a different training provider”

- Relative to the national profile (56% agreement), employers in the following groups were more positive:
 - Larger worksites with 100+ employees (67%).
 - Employers offering both Level 2 and Level 3 (60%).
 - Those who understood a great deal about Apprenticeships (62%).
 - Employers offering more than one framework (63%).
 - Organisations that cite their main framework as Health, Public Services & Care (66%).

- Relative to the national profile (23%), there was more disagreement from:
 - Employers with no completions (31%).
 - Employers who wanted influence but had none (39%).
 - Those who chose Apprenticeship training because it is low cost / free (35%).
 - Organisations who cite their main framework as:
 - Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care (31%)
 - Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies (28%)
 - Construction, Planning & Built Environment (38%)
 - Information & Communication Technology³² (50%)

“Our training provider would adapt the Apprenticeship if we asked them to”

- Relative to the national profile (63% agreement), the following employers were more likely to agree:
 - Larger worksites with 100+ employees (78%).
 - Employers offering both Level 2 and Level 3 (68%).
 - Non-profit seeking organisations (71%).
 - Those offering more than one framework (72%)
 - Employers who chose Apprenticeship training because they perceive it to be best for staff recruitment and retention (71%)

³² Small base size of 72.

- Relative to the national profile (20%), there was significantly more disagreement among:
 - Employers who chose Apprenticeships because they are required in their industry (26%).
 - Organisations whose main framework was Construction, Planning & Built Environment (41%).
 - Employers who had no influence but wanted influence (53%).

“It is not worth spending time trying to tailor Apprenticeship training to the specific needs of my company”

- Relative to the national profile (where 65% of apprentice employers *disagreed*), there was more *disagreement* from:
 - Larger worksites with 100+ employees (80%).
 - Non-profit seeking organisations (73%).
- Relative to the national profile (25%), there was significantly more agreement from:
 - Those with only one apprentice who finished training (28%).
 - Employers with no completions (32%).
 - Employers citing Construction, Planning & Built Environment as their main framework (34%).
 - Employers using apprentices because they are low cost / free (35%) or because Apprenticeships are the required form of training in their industry (32%).

“You can’t expect to request changes to Apprenticeship training if you’re not paying for it”

- Relative to the national profile (where 64% *disagreed*), the following groups were more likely to disagree:
 - Larger worksites with 100+ employees (77%).
 - Non-profit seeking organisations (70%).
 - Employers citing Business, Administration & Law as their main framework (69%).
- Relative to the national profile (where 24% agreed), there was significantly more agreement from:
 - Employers who understood little to nothing about Apprenticeships (28%).

- Single site organisations (27%).
- Employers who chose Apprenticeships because they are the most convenient form of training (30%).
- Employers citing Construction, Planning & Built Environment as their main framework (32%).

The likelihood of employers requesting training providers to make a change

In order to see the impact of these attitudes on employers' propensity to request a change in their Apprenticeship training, CHAID analysis was run among employers who indicated that they *did* want to change something about it. This analysis produced an attitudinal segmentation of 898 employers³³ based on the extent to which their net agreement and disagreement with the five attitudinal statements correlated with their likelihood of asking or not asking for change.

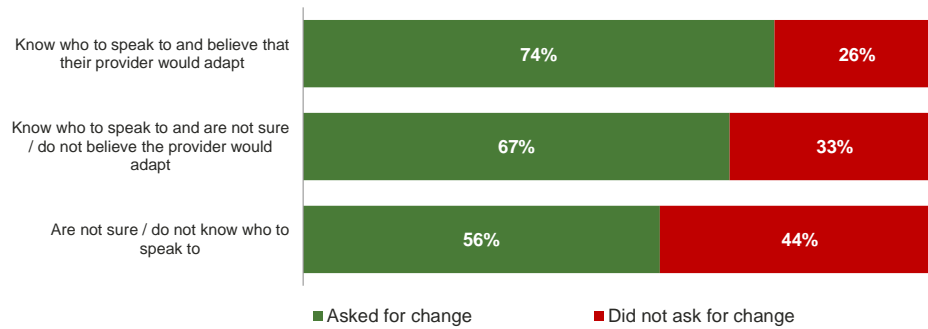
The CHAID analysis demonstrated that agreement with statements *"We know who to speak to about making changes to the Apprenticeship training we get"* and *"Our training provider would adapt the Apprenticeship if we asked them to"* were most predictive of employers' decisions to *ask* for change if they wanted it. This produced a threefold segmentation of employers, each with a different likelihood of asking for change:

- Employers who know who to speak to at their training provider and believe that their provider would adapt the Apprenticeship if asked;
- Employers who know who to speak to and are not sure / do not believe the provider would adapt the Apprenticeship; and
- Employers who are not sure / do not know who to speak to about requesting a change in their training.

Figure 23 outlines the likelihood of these three subgroups asking for change. It is clear that knowing specifically who to speak to at the training provider, and believing that they will respond to adapt the training, has a positive impact on employers' likelihood of asking for change. The proportion of employers in this group who *did* ask for change is 18 percentage points higher than those who wanted change, but who did not know who to speak to about it at their provider.

³³ Employers who gave 'Don't know' and 'Not stated' responses were excluded from the CHAID analysis.

Figure 23: Likelihood of asking providers to adapt the Apprenticeship training among those who wanted change



Base: Know who + believe provider will adapt (390); Know who + do not believe provider will adapt (207); Do not know who to speak to (301)

5. Apprenticeship completion, retention and progression

Key findings

Almost eight in ten employers (78%) said that *all* of their apprentices who finished their training between 1st August 2012 and 31st March 2013 had *completed* the Apprenticeship, similar to last year. As with last year, employers offering the Health, Public Service & Care framework were significantly more likely (82%) to have had all their apprentices complete: these employers were more likely to have provided Apprenticeships to existing staff, and (related to this) those aged 25+. Relative to the national profile, significantly more employers had all their apprentices complete where they were able to influence before and during training.

Two-thirds (65%) of employers said that all of their apprentices who finished training between August 2012 and March 2013 were still working for them at the time of the survey (a year to 18 months later). Thirteen per cent stated that some of their apprentices were still with them, whilst a fifth (20%) said that their apprentices had all left. This pattern is similar to 2013. Retention is higher among those who deliver Apprenticeships to existing staff, and those aged 25+.

Of those who had Level 3 apprentices complete their training in the reference period, over half (54%) said they offered some form of progression to higher level qualifications, and one in four (24%) had apprentices who had gone on to study these. Offering higher level qualifications to Level 3 completers was motivated mainly by workforce development and staff retention strategies, together with a considerable minority who provided them specifically to enable staff to move into management positions. Among employers who did not offer their Level 3 completers any higher-level training, the main reasons were 'no demand / need', 'financial constraints', and 'lack of knowledge' about what to offer.

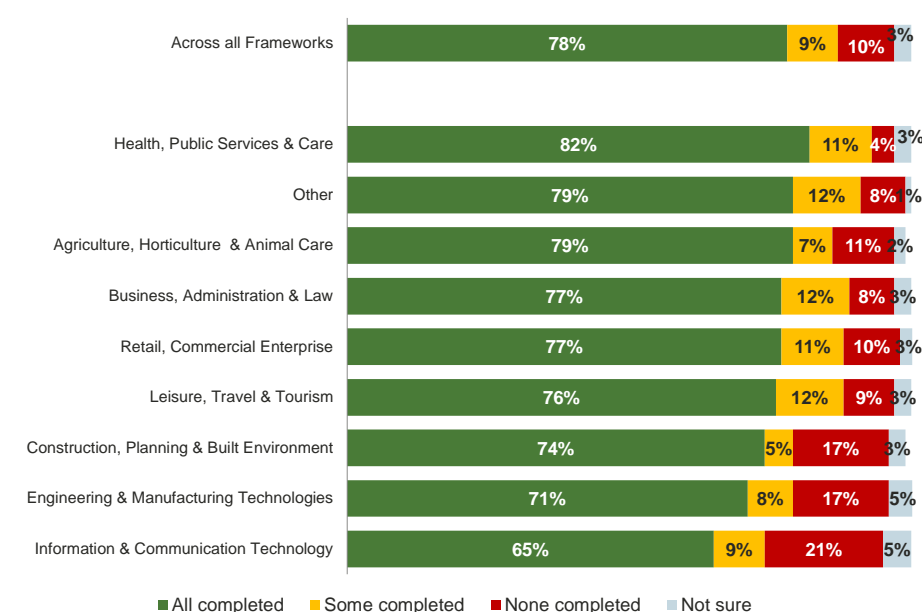
5.1 Completion and non-completion

Almost eight in ten employers (78%) said that *all* of their apprentices who finished their training between 1st August 2012 and 31st March 2013 had *completed* their Apprenticeship. Nine per cent said that some of their apprentices completed, whilst 10%

said that none of them had. These figures are very similar to those in 2013. Like last year, as the number of apprentices who finished during the reference period increased, there was a concordant increase in employers saying that only some of their apprentices completed and a decrease in the proportion saying that none did.

There were variations when looking across frameworks provided³⁴ (Figure 24). As in 2013, employers offering the Health, Public Service & Care framework were significantly more likely (82%) to have had all their apprentices complete. Potentially, this could be an upshot of more apprentices aged 25+ working in the social care sector, in which the completion of Apprenticeship training is increasingly important for individuals to be able to work in the sector. In contrast, like last year, those offering Construction, Planning & Built Environment (17%), Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies (17%), or Information & Communication Technology (21%) were more likely to have had none of their apprentices complete their training. In these latter cases, the completion rates are likely to be related to the higher proportions of young apprentices in these frameworks. This is reflected in the fact that those employers who only employ 16-18 only were significantly more likely to have had no completers (20%).

Figure 24: Whether employers said all, some or none of their apprentices completed, across all frameworks provided



Base: All Frameworks (5159); Health Public Services & Care (1250); Agriculture Horticulture Animal Care (161); Engineering Manufacturing Technologies (481); Construction Planning Built Environment (310); Information Communication Technology (151); Retail Commercial Enterprise (896); Leisure Travel Tourism (180); Business, Administration Law (1554); Other (176)

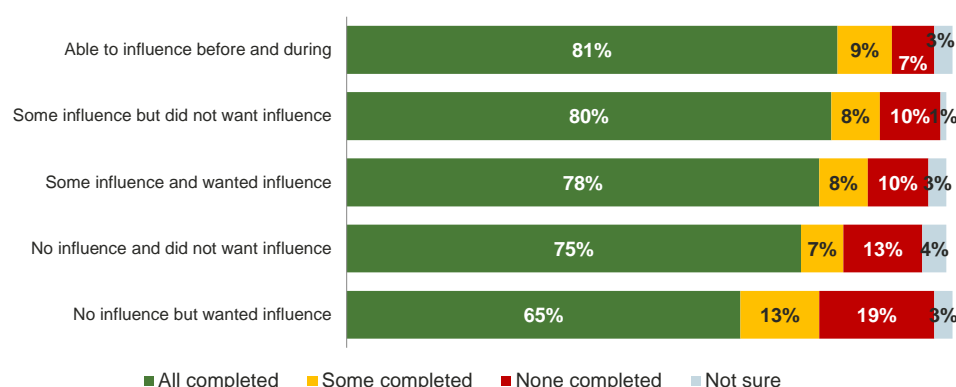
³⁴ 'All Frameworks' rather than 'Main Frameworks'.

Interestingly, those who said that they chose Apprenticeships mainly because they are the ‘most convenient form of training’ (see Chapter 7) were more likely than others to have no completers (15%).

The issue of non-completion may be one of the driving forces behind employers wanting to have influence, although the direction of the relationship is not clear-cut (Figure 25).

Relative to the national profile significantly more employers had all their apprentices complete where they were able to influence before and during training. In contrast, having no influence and *wanting* influence appears to be the most detrimental sub-group in terms of completions – with nearly a fifth (19%) of these employers having no completers at all.

Figure 25: Apprenticeship completions by influence typology



Base: Able to influence before and during (1683); Some influence but didn't want influence (570); Some influence and wanted influence (387); No influence and did not want influence (1036); No influence but wanted influence (355)

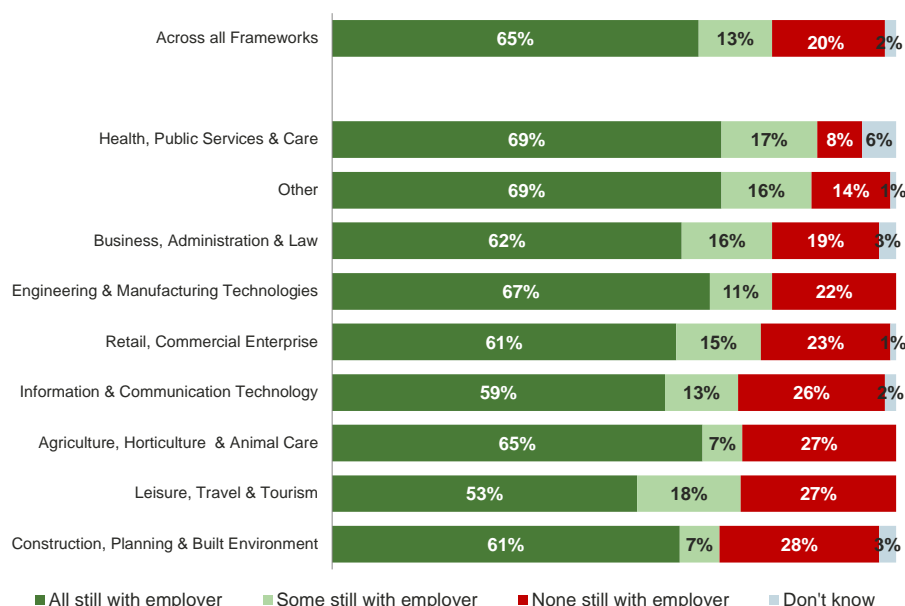
5.2 Retention

Two-thirds (65%) of employers said that all of their apprentices who finished training between August 2012 and March 2013 were still working for them. Thirteen per cent stated that some of their apprentices were still with them, whilst a fifth (20%) of employers stated that their apprentices had all left. This pattern is similar to 2013 when 64% said all and 12% said some of their apprentices were still employed at the company.

When looking across all frameworks (Figure 26), a similar pattern emerges for retention as for completions. Employers offering Health, Public Services & Care are more likely to have kept all the apprentices who finished training (70%), whereas employers offering Construction, Planning & Built Environment (29%), or Retail & Commercial Enterprise (24%) are significantly more likely to have lost all the apprentices who finished. To some extent this reflects the different profiles of the workforce in those sectors, with more young

people, more people on fixed-term contracts, and (in the case of Construction, Planning & the Built Environment) more non-completers.

Figure 26: Apprenticeship retention profile across all frameworks



Base: All Frameworks (5159); Health Public Services & Care (1250); Agriculture Horticulture Animal Care (161); Engineering Manufacturing Technologies (481); Construction Planning Built Environment (310); Information Communication Technology (151); Retail Commercial Enterprise (896); Leisure Travel Tourism (180); Business, Administration Law (1554); Other (176)

As with completion, it is likely that retention rates reflect the age of apprentices. Those employers who only employed apprentices aged 25+ were significantly more likely to have retained all of them (82%). In contrast, those who hired only 16-18 year olds or 19-24 year olds were significantly more likely to have retained none (31% and 30% respectively).

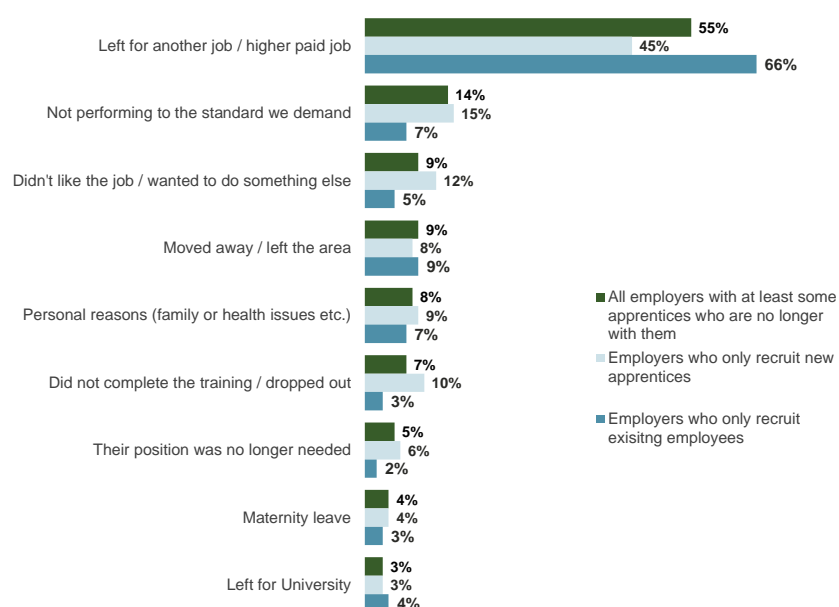
Likewise, those offering Level 3 only were more likely to have retained all apprentices compared to those offering Level 2 only (69% compared with 65%), whereas those offering Level 2 only were more likely to have retained none compared to those offering just Level 3 (24% compared with 21%).

Compared to employers who only hired new recruits as apprentices, employers who only recruited existing staff were likely to have all of them still working for them (70% compared with 60%). Retention was lower among those who only hired apprentices externally, as new recruits: one in four (27%) reported that none of their apprentices were still with the company, compared with 15% of employers who only recruited existing staff. Among employers who hired new recruits as apprentices, there were no differences (in the retention profile) between those who hired apprentices on fixed-term contracts and those who used permanent contracts. For those using fixed term contracts, 59% said that all

their apprentices were still working for them, 14% indicated that some were, and 25% stated that none were. For those offering permanent contracts, the figures were 62%, 10% and 26% respectively. This contrasts with the findings from the 2014 apprentice learner survey in which completers who had been employed on temporary contracts were three times more likely to be unemployed compared to completers who were hired on a permanent basis (12% versus 4%).

Employers who had at least some of their apprentices leave were asked why they had done so (Figure 27). By far the most common reason was that apprentices left to get another / higher paid job (55%), in line with 2013. When looking at the reasons by recruitment type, there is a slight shift, whereby employers who only recruited existing staff found that their apprentices were more likely to leave for a new job (66%) compared to those who only recruited new apprentices (45%). In contrast, those who only recruit as apprentices were more likely to say that the apprentices were not performing to the required standard (15% compared with 7% among those who only provided Apprenticeships to existing employees). In addition, those who only employed new apprentices were more likely to report they had left because they decided to do something else (12% compared with 5%) or dropped out (10% compared with 3%). It is probable that this pattern relates to the difference in age profile between these two types of recruits, with external recruits more likely to be younger and at the start of their working lives.

Figure 27: Employers' views on why their apprentices had left



Base: All employers with at least some apprentices who are no longer with them (1586); Employers who only recruited new apprentices (678); Employers who only recruit existing employees

5.3 Progression to Higher Apprenticeships and other qualifications at Level 4 and above

Awareness of Higher Apprenticeships

On the whole, knowledge about Higher Apprenticeships was limited. Only a fifth (22%) of employers knew a fair amount or a great deal. In contrast, almost half (49%) said that they knew nothing about them (16%) or had never heard of them (33%). Overall this widespread lack of knowledge could be expected given that, until recently, Higher Apprenticeships were mainly offered in a small number of sectors and framework groupings (predominantly accountancy and social care). Awareness was highest among employers with high volumes of apprentices (at 38% for those with 10+ apprentices).

Progression from Level 3 Apprenticeships to higher qualifications

Of those who had Level 3 apprentices complete their training in the reference period, over half (54%) said they offered some form of progression to higher level qualifications, and one in four (24%) had apprentices who had gone on to study these. Although there has been a small reduction on last year (57% and 27% respectively), comparisons should be treated with caution as the sequence and wording of the questions relating to higher level qualifications changed.

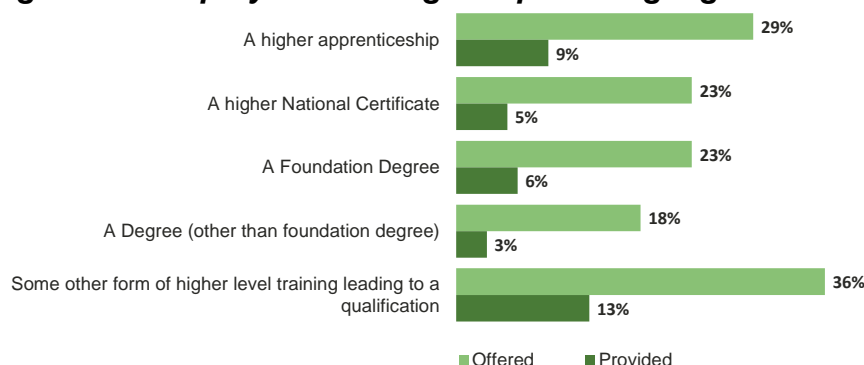
Small worksites (with 1-24 employees) were significantly less likely to offer progression to higher level training (50%). In addition, those employers whose main reason for delivering Apprenticeships rather than another form of training was because they are 'low cost/free' or 'most convenient' were also significantly less likely than average to offer higher level training to their Level 3 completers (48%), as were employers whose main framework was Construction, Planning & Built Environment (41%), Retail & Commercial Enterprise (45%), or Leisure, Travel & Tourism (35%).

The types of higher level qualifications that employers offered their Level 3 completers, and why

Figure 28 outlines the types of higher level qualifications that are offered and the proportion of employers who provide them. Compared to 2013, fewer employers who had Level 3 completers said they offered Higher Apprenticeships (29% now compared with 34% then) but the proportion that had actually provided these was consistent (at 9% compared with 11%). More employers said they offered 'some other form of higher level training leading to a qualification' than in 2013 (36% compared with 31%). While these

apparent changes since last year are statistically significant, interpretations should be drawn lightly because the sequence and wording of these questions changed.

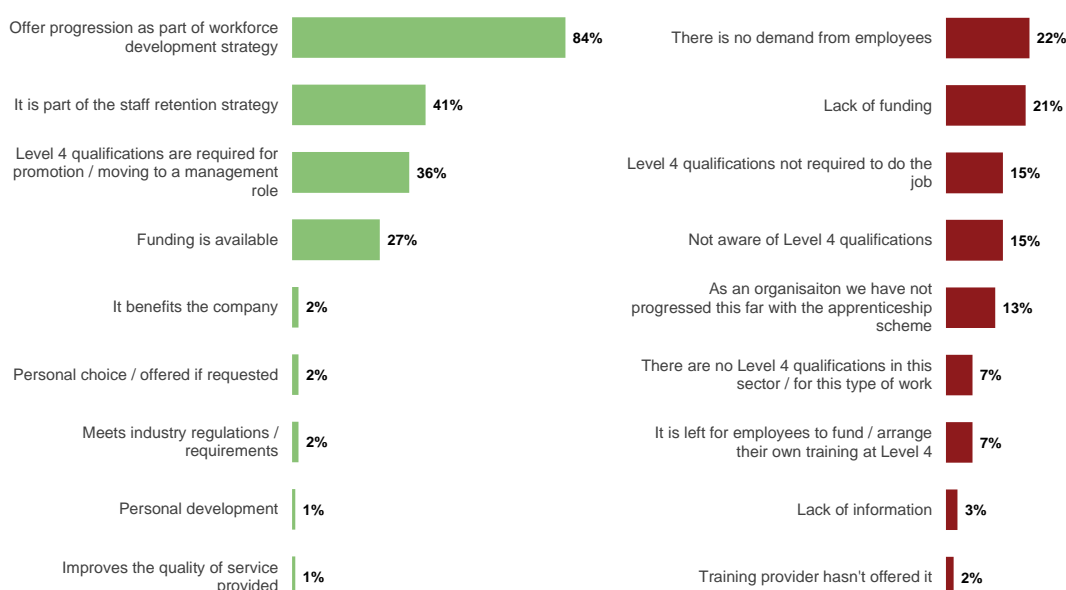
Figure 28: Employers offering and providing higher level qualifications



Base: All employers who had Level 3 completers (2355)

Four reasons dominated employers' decisions to offer higher level qualifications (Figure 29). The most common was that these were offered as part of their wider workforce development strategy (84%). A third (36%) of employers who offered these qualifications said that they were necessary for developing their staff and moving them to more senior roles. In contrast to these 'direct' benefits, a significant minority (41%) of employers were using higher qualifications as a staff retention strategy, and just over a quarter (27%) indicated that the availability of funding influenced their decision.

Figure 29: Reasons for offering or not offering higher level qualifications



Base: All who do offer progression to Level 4 to apprentices who complete Level 3 (1347)

Base: All who do not offer progression to Level 4 to apprentices who complete Level 3 (1008)

Moving to why some employers do *not* offer higher level qualifications, employers' reasons could be grouped under three main themes: 'no demand / need'; 'financial constraints'; and 'lack of knowledge'.

For the 'no demand / need' theme, the most common reasons cited by employers was a lack of demand (22%), followed by the fact that Level 4 qualifications were not required for employees to do their job (16%), or the company had not progressed this far in their involvement with Apprenticeship training (13%).

For the 'financial constraints' theme, the main reason cited by employers was a lack of funding (21%). Likewise, 7% of employers stated that it was up to the employees to arrange / fund their own training at Level 4.

The 'lack of knowledge' theme included 16% of employers who were not aware of any relevant Level 4 qualifications. Smaller numbers of employers said there is a lack of information about them (3%), or that their training provider had not offered them (2%).

The first and third themes suggest a more passive attitude towards offering training for higher qualifications (above Level 3) whereby the decision not to offer them is characterised by the *absence* of any need, demand, or knowledge etc. In contrast, the second theme reflects a more deliberate stance by employers not to fund Level 4 training due to financial constraints.

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6. Employer satisfaction with Apprenticeships

Key findings

Employers remain satisfied with Apprenticeships. Three in five apprentice employers (62%) rated their main Apprenticeship programme highly (scoring it at 8-10) including 32% who gave it an especially high rating (score of 9-10), indicating they were very satisfied. Last year these figures were similar at 60% and 30% respectively.

As in 2013, overall satisfaction varied by employer size and main framework. Those providing the Health, Public Service & Care framework as their main Apprenticeship were significantly more likely to be very satisfied than employers nationally (68%), and more so than in 2013 (60%). In contrast, and as found in 2013, employers whose main framework was Construction, Planning & Built Environment or ICT were less likely than average to be 'very satisfied'.

Employers offering Level 3 Apprenticeships only were more likely to be very satisfied than those who only offered Level 2 (67% compared with 59%). Likewise, employers who had Level 4 apprentices were more likely to be very satisfied (70%). High levels of overall satisfaction were also linked to employer influence. Just a quarter of employers who had no influence but wanted some were 'very satisfied' (23%), compared with three-quarters (74%) of those who had influence before and after the training started.

Looking into satisfaction with various aspects of the Apprenticeship programme, employers were most satisfied with the quality of the training and assessment, together with the flexible way these were offered by their training provider. As in 2013, they were least satisfied with their ability to influence the content, structure or duration of the Apprenticeships, and with the quality of applicants. However, in the latter case, there was no difference by the mode of recruitment or type of contract offered.

Just like last year, 35% of employers said they would recommend Apprenticeships *without being asked*, however there was a drop (from 47% to 44%) in those who said they would do so *if asked*. Thus, while there was a high overall 'recommendation score' of 79%, this fell slightly short of last year's score of 82%. Those who wanted influence and did not have any were significantly less likely to recommend without being asked (24%), and more likely to be neutral or, if asked, to recommend against.

In this section we explore employers' views on a range of issues relating to the delivery of Apprenticeships, including the quality of applicants, their ability to select an appropriate framework, and the quality of support and training delivery from their training provider.

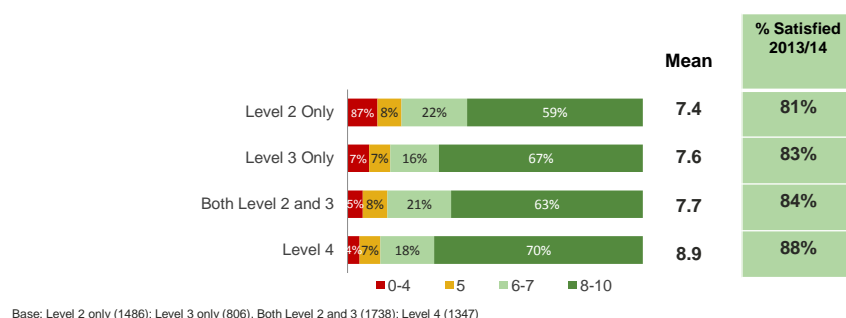
Overall satisfaction with Apprenticeship training

Employers were asked to provide an overall satisfaction rating for the Apprenticeship programme from 0-10 (with 0 being 'very dissatisfied', 5 being 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied', and 10 being 'very satisfied'). Overall, 80% of apprentice employers were satisfied (scoring it 6 out of 10 or higher) with their main Apprenticeship programme. Three in five (62%) rated it more highly (scoring it at 8-10) including 32% who gave it an especially high rating (score of 9-10), indicating they were very satisfied. Last year these figures were similar at 60% and 30% respectively.

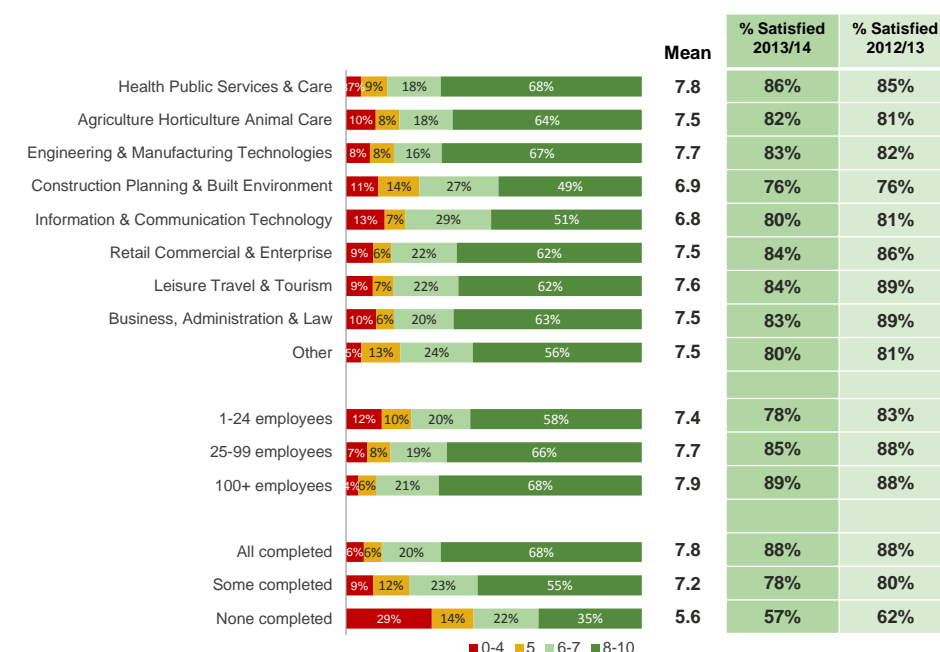
Looking across different types of employer, we find the following patterns which are similar to those identified in 2013:

- Larger organisations³⁵ (with 100+ employees) had a higher proportion of 'very satisfied' (scoring 8-10) employers (68%) (Figure 30).
- Likewise, employers with higher volumes of apprentices were significantly more likely to be very satisfied (68% of those with 10 or more apprentices rated their programme a score of 8-10 overall)
- In a similar vein, worksites which were part of a larger organisation were also significantly more very satisfied (68% for Head offices *and* branches). In contrast, fewer single site organisations were very satisfied (58%).
- Similar to last year, the Level of Apprenticeship offer played a part: Those offering Level 3 only were more likely to be very satisfied than those who only offered Level 2 (67% compared with 59%). Likewise, employers who had Level 4 apprentices were more likely to be very satisfied (70%) than those offering Level 2 only (see Figure 30).

³⁵ Please note – not *worksites* although the pattern was closely reflected across worksites too.

Figure 30: Overall satisfaction profile by level of Apprenticeship

Satisfaction levels varied by employers' main framework (Figure 31) and in similar ways to 2013. Those providing Health, Public Service & Care as their main Apprenticeship were significantly more likely to be very satisfied than employers nationally (68%), and more so than in 2013 (60%). In contrast, and as found in 2013, employers whose main framework was Construction, Planning & Built Environment or ICT were less likely than average to be 'very satisfied'.

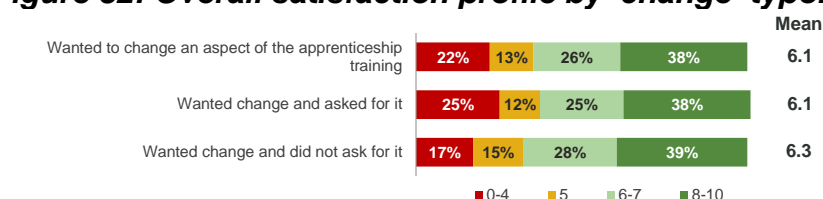
Figure 31: Overall satisfaction profile by main framework, organisation size, and completion levels

Like last year, satisfaction levels are also clearly linked to completion levels, with employers significantly more likely to be very satisfied if all their apprentices complete (68%), and significantly more likely to be dissatisfied if none of them do (with 43% of these rating the Apprenticeship programme overall at 5 or less).

High levels of satisfaction were also linked to the five-fold influence typology presented in Chapter 4. In particular, employers who had no influence but wanted some were more likely than others to be dissatisfied. Just a quarter of these (23%) were ‘very satisfied’ with their main Apprenticeship programme, compared with three-quarters (74%) of those who had influence before and after the training started, and three in five (62%) of those who had no influence and did not want any.

Furthermore, those who said they had wanted to make a change to their Apprenticeship training were less satisfied relative to those who did not (Figure 30 shows the mean score among this group hovered around 6 out of 10). The relationship between actually *requesting* a change and overall satisfaction is a little less clear cut. Those who did ask for a change were significantly more likely to be dissatisfied than those who did not ask (25% compared with 17%) (Figure 32). One possible explanation is that those who would have liked a change, but did not ask for one, may have been less concerned with the issue they wanted to address. Alternatively, where some employers actively asked for change, their training provider may not have responded in a way which met their needs, which could possibly have exacerbated their dissatisfaction.

Figure 32: Overall satisfaction profile by ‘change’ typology

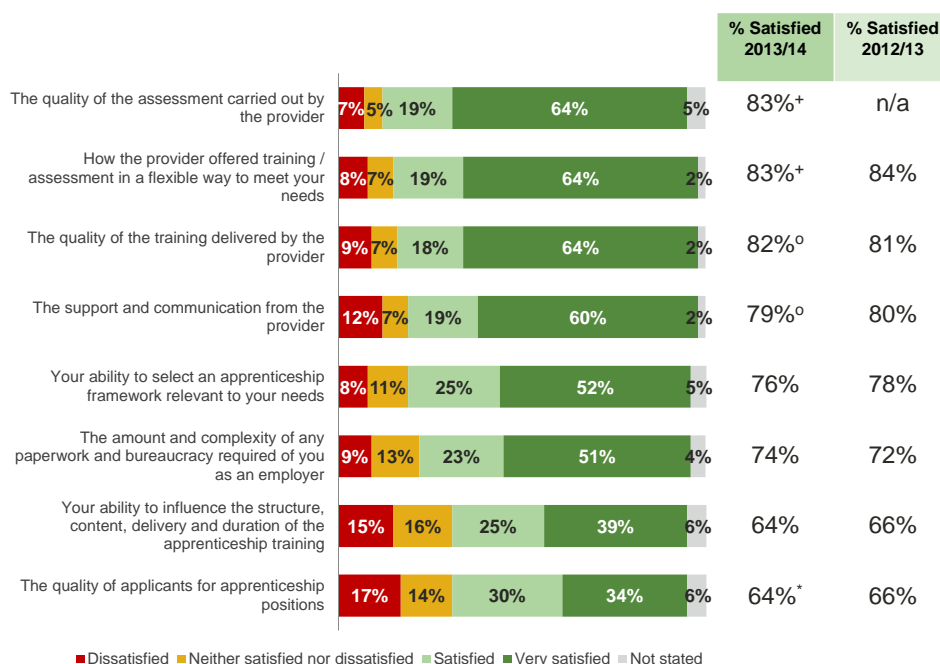


Base: Wanted change (1190); Wanted change and asked (633); Wanted change and didn't ask (525)

Aspects of satisfaction

As with last year, employers were asked how satisfied they were with a range of specific aspects of the Apprenticeship training using the same zero to ten scale as for overall satisfaction³⁶. The pattern was similar to last year, and responses for each statement are summarised in Figure 33.

³⁶ As previously we have interpreted a score of 8-10 as ‘very satisfied’, 6-7 as ‘satisfied’, 5 as ‘neither’, and 0-4 as ‘dissatisfied’.

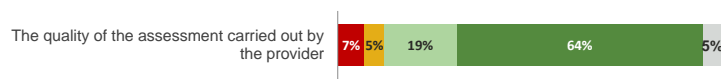
Figure 33: Satisfaction profile for specific aspects of Apprenticeship training

Base: All (4030) except for + = All who se providers train and/or assess (3995); * = All who recruit externally (1936); o = All whose providers train (3843);

Variations in responses to each statement are explored in more detail in the following sections. It should be noted that there were some general patterns, which are not reported in detail:

- There was very little difference when looking across the level of the Apprenticeship, however employers offering both Levels 2 and 3 were slightly more likely to say they were 'very satisfied', and so too were employers with Level 4 apprentices.
- Employers tended to be more dissatisfied if they either wanted to change something about the Apprenticeships or if they wanted influence but did not have any.

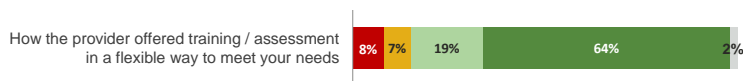
Quality of the assessment carried out by the provider



- There was little variation by size of employer for this aspect of Apprenticeship training, with the only difference being that employers with 1-24 employees were more likely to say they were dissatisfied (8%).

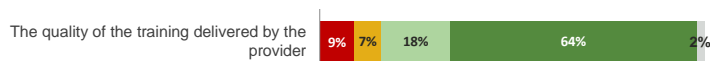
- In terms of main framework, employers offering Information, Communication and Technology were more likely to say they were dissatisfied (18%), and those offering Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care more likely to be very satisfied (78%).
- Employers with no completions were significantly less likely to be very satisfied (42% compared with 64% overall) and significantly more dissatisfied (20% compared with just 7% nationally). This potentially links to the quality of the applicants. Employers who were dissatisfied with the quality of applicants were significantly more likely to say that they were dissatisfied with the quality of the assessment compared to those who were satisfied or very satisfied with the applicants (19% vs 4%).

How the provider offered training and/or assessment in a flexible way to meet your needs



- Larger worksites (with 100+ employees) were more likely to be very satisfied (71% compared with 64% nationally). Training providers may be more attentive to the needs of larger employers with more 'customer clout' and who are more likely to want and exert influence.
- There was little difference across main framework, although a significantly higher proportion of employers providing Construction, Planning & Built Environment were dissatisfied (16%).

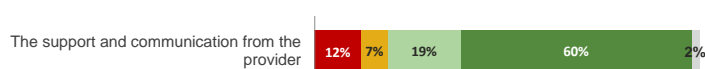
Quality of the training delivered by the provider



- Higher proportions of larger worksites (100+ employees) were very satisfied with the quality of training compared to the national profile (73% compared with 64%).
- Multi-site organisations were also more likely to be very satisfied (71% of Head Offices and 70% of branches). In contrast, fewer single site organisations (59%) were very satisfied, and significantly more were dissatisfied with the quality of training (12% compared with 9% nationally and 5% of multi-site organisations). It may well be that larger companies receive a relatively 'better service' from training providers because they represent more lucrative 'customers'.

- Across main framework, significantly more employers offering Retail & Commercial Enterprise (69%) were very satisfied with the quality of training. In contrast, those offering Information & Communication were significantly more dissatisfied 22% (compared with 9% nationally). There is a clear relationship between completion rates and satisfaction with the quality of training. Those who had all apprentices complete were 68% very satisfied (compared with 64% nationally), whereas those who had 'some' or 'no' completions had higher proportions of employers who were dissatisfied (particularly so for the latter) – 12% and 25% respectively.

Support and communication from the provider



- Again, significantly more large worksites were very satisfied with the communication from their provider (70% of those with 100+ employees compared with 60% nationally). Significantly more single site organisations were dissatisfied (16% compared with 12% nationally).
- Employers identifying Construction, Planning & Built Environment or Information & Communication Technologies as their main framework were significantly more dissatisfied (21% and 26% respectively).
- Employers who were dissatisfied with their ability to influence the structure, content, delivery or duration of training were particularly dissatisfied with the support and communication from the provider (39%). In contrast, those who were very satisfied with their ability to influence the training were more likely to be very satisfied with the support and communication with the provider (82%). Again, this emphasises the importance of provider accessibility and responsiveness in facilitating employers' ability to influence Apprenticeships (see also Chapter 4). Almost a third (31%) of employers who had no completions were dissatisfied with the support and communication from the provider (compared with 12% overall). Whilst it is not possible to explore this through the current survey data, it would be interesting to know the extent to which the 'no completions' were due to apprentices failing their end assessment or dropping out of the training. If it was the former, then this would suggest that the employers' dissatisfaction arose as a result of quality issues with the training provider.

Ability to select a framework relevant to needs

Your ability to select an apprenticeship framework relevant to your needs



- Satisfaction was again higher among large worksites (100+ employees) with 63% very satisfied. This is in line with previous qualitative work which illustrated the way in which large employers have greater capacity and influence to shape the design of Apprenticeship training.
- There was little difference across main frameworks, except that employers offering Health, Public Service & Care were significantly more likely than others to be very satisfied (58%).

Amount and complexity of paperwork and bureaucracy

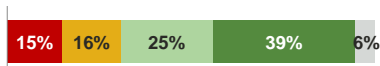
The amount and complexity of any paperwork and bureaucracy required of you as an employer



- Significantly more employers who recruited from existing employees were very satisfied with the amount and complexity of paperwork and bureaucracy (55% compared with 51% nationally).
- Employers with no completions were significantly more dissatisfied (at 21% more than twice the 9% of employers nationally). It is possible that these employers were particularly dissatisfied when they perceived no positive training outcome for their efforts.
- Across main framework, employers who provided Construction, Planning & Built Environment were again more likely to be dissatisfied (14%). This is an interesting observation as the construction sector has relatively more Apprenticeship Training Associations which are able to offer advice and guidance on the administration involved with Apprenticeships.

Ability to influence structure, content, delivery & duration of training

Your ability to influence the structure, content, delivery and duration of the apprenticeship training

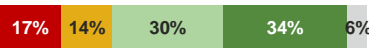


- Large worksites (with 100+ employees) were more likely to be very satisfied with their ability to influence the training (48% compared with 39% overall).
- Likewise employers with more apprentices were also more likely to be very satisfied (44% of those with 3-9 apprentices and 48% of those with 10+).

- Findings by main framework were fairly consistent although employers providing Construction, Planning & Built Environment were again more likely to be dissatisfied (25%).
- Those who wanted to change something were more likely to be dissatisfied with their ability to influence training compared to those who did not want change (33% compared with 8% respectively).
- Employers with Level 4 apprentices were more likely to say they were very satisfied with their ability to influence training (44%) and less likely to be dissatisfied (10%). This may be an upshot of employer involvement in the Government's Higher Apprenticeship Fund, which provided funding to the development of certain Level 4 frameworks.

Quality of applicants

The quality of applicants for apprenticeship positions



- Employers overall remained least satisfied with this aspect of Apprenticeships. Relatively more large worksites (100+ employees) were very satisfied with the quality of applicants (42%). In contrast, worksites with 1-24 employees were significantly more dissatisfied (19%). It is likely that larger worksites attract more applications in general, and they may well be more attractive to apprentices who wish to progress to further training (as outlined in Chapter 5).
- Interestingly, there was no association between employers' satisfaction with the quality of applicants and the age of the apprentices they recruited.
- Similarly, there was no difference between those who only recruited new apprentices and those who recruited both new apprentices and existing staff. Neither was there any difference when looking at the type of contract offered (i.e. fixed-term versus permanent).
- Satisfaction was generally consistent across main frameworks too, except that employers providing Retail & Commercial Enterprise were significantly more likely to be dissatisfied (25%).
- Employers with no Apprenticeship completions were significantly more likely to be dissatisfied with the quality of applicants (31%) compared to those who had some apprentices complete (22%) or all apprentices complete (13%).

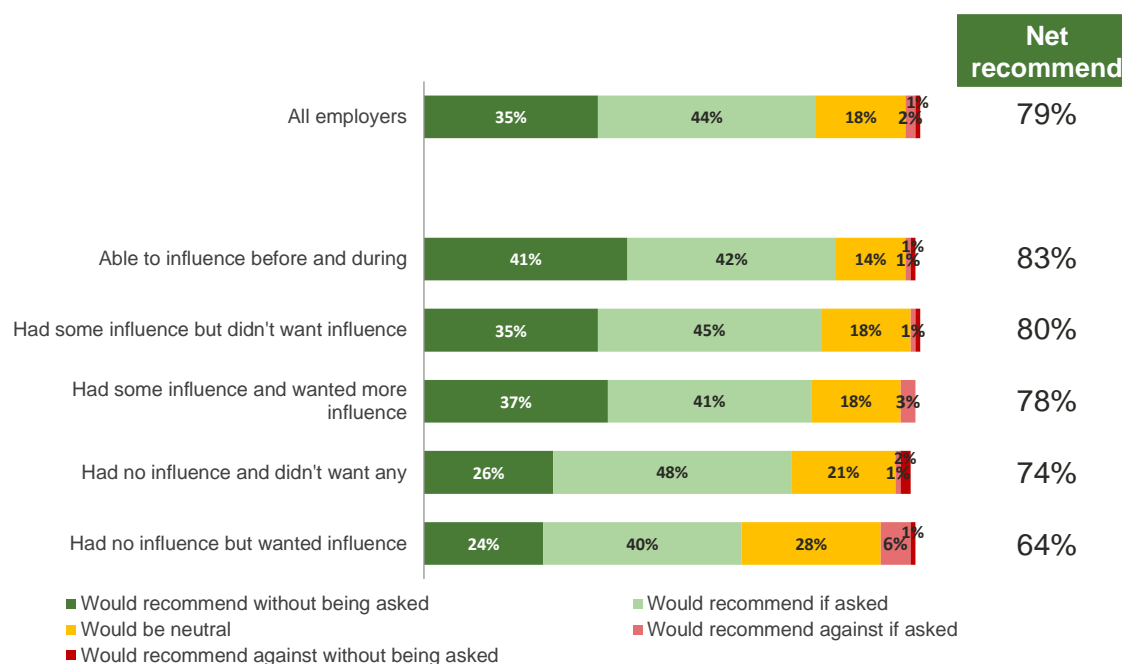
Do employers recommend Apprenticeships as a form of training?

Similar to last year's survey, employers were asked whether they would recommend Apprenticeships to other employers. Just like last year, 35% said they would recommend Apprenticeships *without being asked*, however there was a drop (from 47% to 44%) in those who said they would do so *if asked*. Thus, while this year's overall 'recommendation score' remained high at 79%, it was below that of 2013 (82%). Only three per cent of employers said they would recommend *against* Apprenticeships, whilst 18% would be neutral (similar to the findings last year).

Advocacy was statistically higher for larger worksites and those with more apprentices. There was very little difference by main framework, although employers providing Business, Administration and Law were more likely to recommend without being asked (40% compared with 35% nationally). Similarly, there was little variation when looking at the level of the Apprenticeships, although employers offering both Level 2 and Level 3 were more likely to recommend (83% saying they would recommend either 'without being asked' or 'if asked'), and employers with Level 4 apprentices were more likely to recommend without being asked (39%).

In terms of the influence typology outlined in Chapter 4, the key difference was for those who wanted influence and did not have any. They were significantly less likely to recommend without being asked (24%), and more likely to be neutral or to recommend against if asked (Figure 34).

Figure 34: Apprenticeship advocacy profile across all employers and influence typology



Base: All (4030); Able to influence before and during (1683); Some influence but didn't want influence (570); Some influence and wanted influence (387); No influence and did not want influence (1036); No influence but wanted influence (355)

7. Impacts of Apprenticeships

Key findings

Employers who were *aware* that at least some of their trainees had been doing an Apprenticeship were asked why they had opted for Apprenticeships, relative to other forms of training available. Business relevance was the most common reason (mentioned by 25%) while the least common was that Apprenticeships were low cost or free (mentioned by 13%).

Different reasons for providing Apprenticeships were associated with different levels of overall satisfaction. Of the five reasons presented, the two which were associated with the highest levels of satisfaction were 'offering Apprenticeship training because it is the best way of improving recruitment and retention' (71% of these employers were very satisfied) or because it is 'the most relevant form of training to their business' (70% very satisfied).

These two reasons for providing Apprenticeships were reflected in anticipated and achieved benefits. Maintaining or improving future skill levels in the business was the most commonly anticipated benefit (95%), followed by improving product/service quality and improving productivity (mentioned by over 80% of employers).

Almost nine in ten employers who had hoped for benefits received them, with the most 'successful' being 'improving staff morale' (91% of those hoping to achieve this said it was realised), 'improving or maintaining future skills levels' (89%), 'improving productivity' (89%) and 'improving product or service quality' (86%). In contrast, the benefits which employers felt were least realised (though still accounting for a majority of those expecting them) were 'winning business' (73% of employers hoping to achieve this say it was realised), and 'ability to attract good staff' (79%) – both of which were in line with 2013.

In this section we explore the extent to which employers have offered other forms of training as well as Apprenticeships. We then look at the reasons why employers have chosen to provide Apprenticeship programmes versus other forms of work-based training. We also examine the benefits that employers expected to get from providing Apprenticeships and the extent to which these have been realised.

Extent of other Level 2 and 3 training offered

Off the job training

Almost two-thirds (64%) of worksites said that they had arranged or funded other forms of off-the-job training or development in the past 12 months. This was far more common at larger worksites employing 100+ staff (87%) than smaller worksites with 1-24 staff (57%). It was also significantly more likely at Head Offices (81%) than branches (63%) or single site organisations (62%).

Looking across main framework, more employers providing Health, Public Services & Care provided other off-the-job training compared to the national profile (77%), whilst employers providing Construction, Planning & Built Environment or Retail & Commercial Enterprise were significantly less likely to have done so (57% and 49% respectively).

On the job training

The pattern of providing on-the-job training (in addition to Apprenticeships) closely reflects that for off-the-job training. Just over two thirds (68%) of employers offered other forms of on-the-job training and again this was more prevalent at larger worksites (90% of those with 100+ staff compared with 60% of workplaces in the smallest category).

Providing other on-the-job training was also significantly more common in non-profit organisations (81% compared with 68% nationally), and where employers recruited both new apprentices *and* existing employees (79%).

Employers who had no apprentice completions were significantly more likely to say that they did not offer any other on-the-job training (40% compared with 31% nationally). Given that this group were also most likely to be dissatisfied with training providers, they may be reticent to source further training.

Again, there was no association between the provision of additional on-the-job training and employer influence. However, those employers who wanted to change aspects of the Apprenticeship training and *did* ask were significantly more likely to have provided other on-the-job training (73%). This suggests those who ask may have a greater level of engagement with training in general compared to those who do not.

By main framework, more Health, Public Services & Care employers than average provided other on-the-job training (82%), whilst employers whose main frameworks were

Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies (38%), Construction, Planning & Built Environment (42%), or Retail & Commercial Enterprise (43%) were significantly less likely to have done so. Possible explanations for this observation might be that employers in the Health and Social Care sector may require employees to engage in continual professional development to a greater extent, or this sector may see more frequent legislative or health and safety changes which require additional training.

Achieving other Level 2 and 3 Qualifications

Those employers who had arranged or funded other forms of (on- or off-the-job) training over the past 12 months were asked if this training had led to any Level 2 or 3 qualifications (other than those associated with Apprenticeships). In total, 47% of employers said that the training *had* led to other qualifications, whilst the remaining employers (53%) indicated that it had not. The breakdown of achievements by level is shown below in Table 3, and it was fairly evenly split across Levels 2 and 3.

Table 3: Achievement of Level 2 and 3 qualifications through training other than Apprenticeships

	Base	Level 2 only	Level 2		Level 3 only	Level 3	Both Levels 2 and 3	None
Size of worksite								
1-24 employees	1,435	11%	29%		9%	27%	18%	57%
25- 99 employees	1,160	12%	38%		7%	33%	26%	49%
100+ employees	641	8%	48%		9%	49%	40%	37%
Total <i>(All employers who had arranged other training)</i>	3,263	11%	34%		9%	32%	23%	53%

Larger worksites (100+ employees) were more likely to have provided training that led to qualifications at both levels (40%), whilst smaller worksites (1-24 employees) and single site organisations were significantly more likely to have had none (57% and 58% respectively).

Unsurprisingly (given the profile of additional training provision), employers that identified Health, Public Services & Care as their main framework were more likely to have provided other qualifications at both levels (35%), and those providing Construction, Planning &

Built Environment were more likely to have provided none (64%) - perhaps due to the dominance of Apprenticeships versus other forms of training in the construction sector.

Why use Apprenticeship training versus other forms of training?

Understanding why employers chose to use Apprenticeships is an important focus. In 2013, BIS commissioned a qualitative report³⁷ which identified a typology of different types of motivation for providing Apprenticeships, as opposed to other forms of training. To quantify the relative prevalence of these views, this typology was distilled into five statements, which were tested in this year's survey questionnaire. Employers who were *aware*³⁸ that at least some of their trainees had been doing an Apprenticeship were asked why they had opted for Apprenticeships, relative to other forms of training available to them. They could only select one answer from the following list:

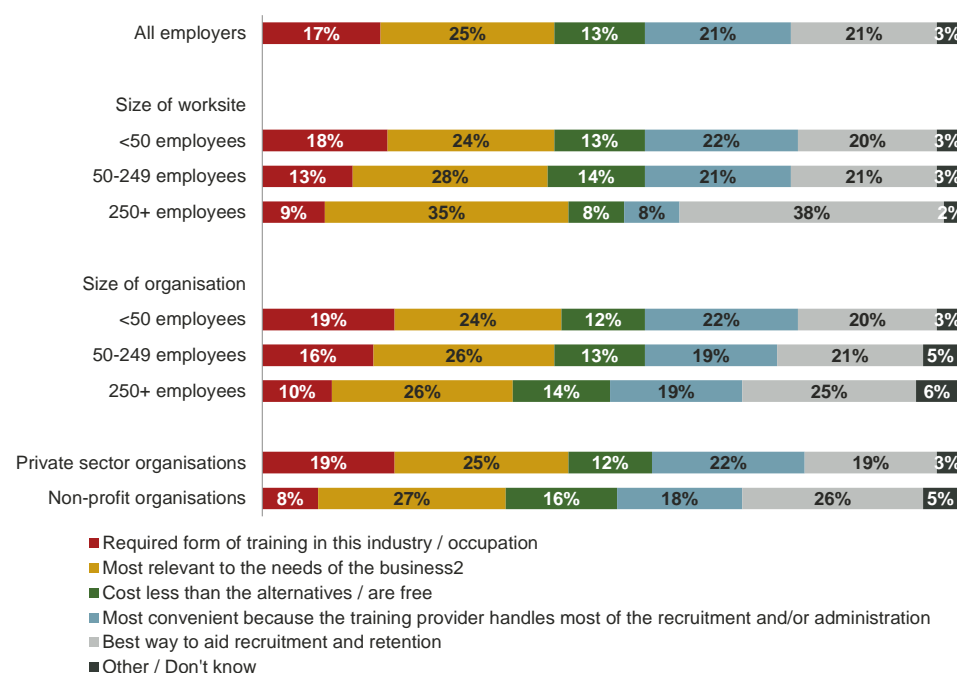
- 1) Apprenticeships are the required form of training in this industry / occupation
- 2) Apprenticeships are most relevant to the needs of the business
- 3) Apprenticeships cost less than the alternatives / are free.
- 4) Apprenticeships are most convenient because the training provider handles most of the recruitment and/or administration
- 5) Apprenticeships are the best way to aid recruitment and retention

On the whole, views were fairly evenly represented across employers; with business relevance being the most common reason (mentioned by 25%) and Apprenticeships being provided at low cost or free being the least common (mentioned by 13%).

³⁷ Hogarth T., Adams L., Gambin L., Garnett E. and M. Winterbotham (2014) '[Employer Routed Funding: Employer Responses to Funding Reform](#)', *BIS Research Paper 161*. London: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

³⁸ 62% of the employer population versus 37% who were not aware (see Chapter 2).

Figure 35: Reasons for using Apprenticeships across all employers, and by size of worksite, and employer type



Base: All employers who are aware that training was an Apprenticeship (2513); Size of worksite - <50 (1715); 50-249 (530); 250+ (274). Size of organisation - <50 (1234); 50-249 (451); 250+ (762). Private sector (1936); Non-profit (577)

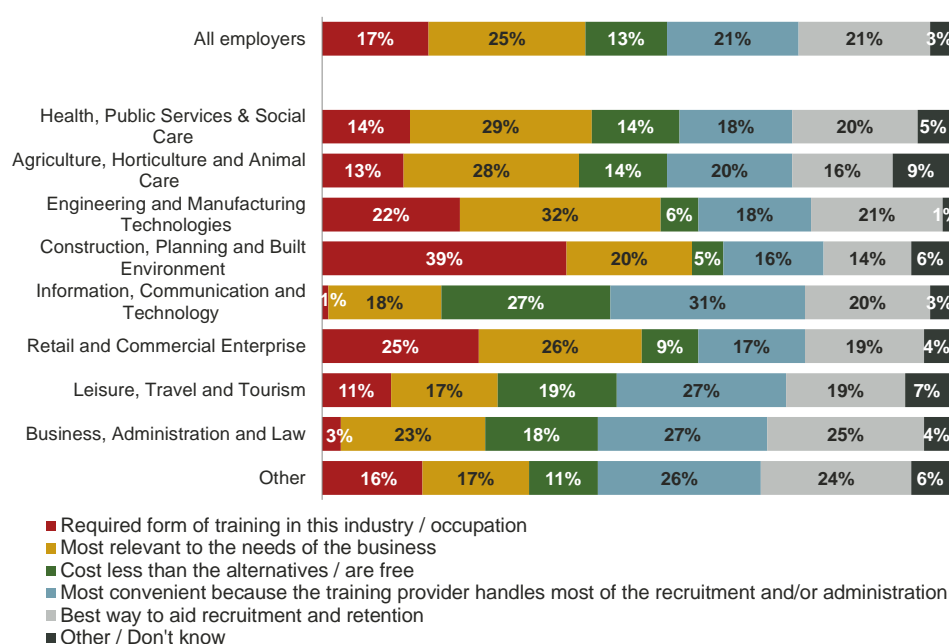
There was little difference by size of organisation, but some difference when looking at size of worksite. Whilst the reasons given by small worksites (<50 employees) typically did not differ from the national profile, larger worksites (250+ employees) were significantly more likely to state Apprenticeships were relevant to business needs (35%) or the best way to aid recruitment and retention (38%). Larger sites were also less likely to say Apprenticeships were chosen for their convenience (because the training provider handled most of the recruitment and/or administration, mentioned by 8%) or that Apprenticeships were the required form of training in this industry / occupation (again, mentioned by 8%).

Private sector organisations looking to make a profit were more likely to say Apprenticeships were the required form of training in their industry / occupation (19%), whilst non-profit organisations were significantly more likely to say Apprenticeships were the best way to aid recruitment and retention (26%). There was no statistically significant difference in their propensity to outline cost as a driver. In contrast, whilst there was little difference in terms of recruitment-related reasons, those employers who only recruited existing employees were more likely to state they chose Apprenticeships due to cost (17%). Relative to the national profile, employers who only recruit existing employees are more likely to operate in the following sectors: Wholesale, Retail and Motor Repair (16% vs 14%); Accommodation and food services (16% vs 10%), and Human Health and Social

Work (29% vs 23%). Whilst employers in the Human Health and Social Work sector are more likely to arrange or fund training in addition to Apprenticeships, employers based in the other two sectors are significantly less likely to. This suggests that employers in these sectors may be more reluctant to train existing staff if they have to fully fund the training themselves.

There were some variations by main framework (Figure 36). Employers citing Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies were more likely to say that Apprenticeships were the most relevant training to address the needs of their business (32%) and the required form of training in their sector (22%). Similarly, significantly more employers providing Construction, Planning & Built Environment (39%) or Retail & Commercial Enterprise (25%) stated that Apprenticeships were the required form of training in their sector.

Figure 36: Reasons for using Apprenticeships across main framework provided



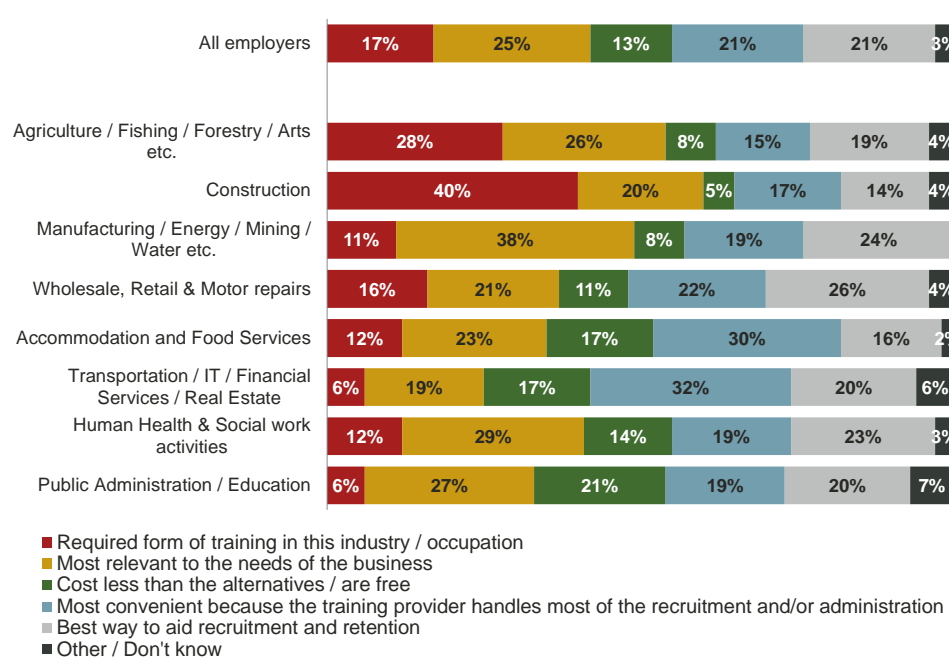
Base: All employers who are aware that training was an Apprenticeship (2513); Main sector subject area: Health Public Services & Care (667); Agriculture Horticulture Animal Care (112); Engineering Manufacturing Technologies (319); Construction Planning Built Environment (248); Information Communication Technology (52); Retail Commercial Enterprise (362); Leisure Travel Tourism (99); Business, Administration Law (577); Other (71).

Employers whose main Apprenticeship framework was in Business, Administration & Law were more likely than most other employers to have selected Apprenticeships because of convenience (27%), or because they regarded Apprenticeships as the best way to aid recruitment and retention (25%). Employers whose main frameworks were Business, Administration & Law (18%) or Information & Communication Technologies (27%) were

more likely to cite that they had chosen to deliver Apprenticeships because they cost less than the alternatives or were free.

Broadly speaking, the patterns observed across main framework were reflected across sector with, for example, employers in the Construction sector, more likely to say that Apprenticeships were the required form of training. The Manufacturing and the Human Health and Social work sectors favoured Apprenticeships because they were most relevant to the needs of the business, whilst employers in Accommodation and Food Services were more likely to choose Apprenticeships because they were most convenient³⁹. Employers in Public Administration /Education were more likely than those in other sectors to say that they chose Apprenticeships because they cost less than alternative forms of training, or were free.

Figure 37: Reasons for using Apprenticeships by industry sector



Base: All employers who are aware that training was an Apprenticeship (2513); Agriculture / Fishing / Forestry / Arts etc. (325); Construction (243); Manufacturing / Energy / Mining / Water etc. (236); Wholesale, Retail & Motor repairs (259); Accommodation and Food Services (134); Transportation / IT / Financial Services / Real Estate (334); Human Health & Social work activities (665); Public Administration / Education (299)

Different reasons for providing Apprenticeships were also associated with different levels of overall satisfaction. Employers who offered Apprenticeship training because they considered it to be the best way of improving recruitment and retention or the most relevant form of training to their business were more likely than others to be very satisfied

³⁹ Due to small base sizes, employers in the Transportation, IT, Financial Services, and Real Estate sectors were grouped together. Therefore, caution is urged in drawing conclusions about this group.

(71% and 69% respectively). In comparison, fewer employers who offered Apprenticeships mainly because they were required by the industry (61%), low cost (53%), or most convenient (61%) were very satisfied.

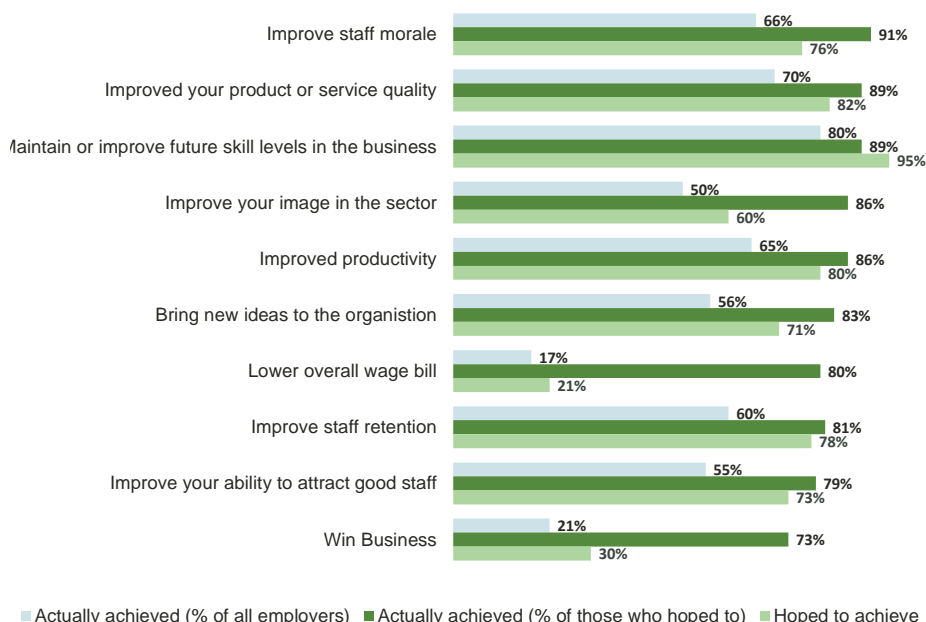
Perceived benefits of Apprenticeships and whether these are realised

As in last year's survey, employers were asked which benefits they had anticipated by offering Apprenticeships and whether or not they had achieved these.

The benefit that employers most frequently said they hoped to achieve by offering Apprenticeships was 'Maintaining or improving future skill level in the business' (cited by 95% of employers). In contrast, 'Lowering the overall wage bill' was the least anticipated benefit, with only 17% of employers anticipating it.

In terms of benefits actually realised, the profile closely resembles last year, with 'Improved staff morale' being the most realised benefit (by 91% of those who hoped to achieve it). In contrast, 'Winning business' was the benefit that was least realised (although 73% of employers who were aiming for this by offering Apprenticeships were able to achieve it) (Figure 34).

Figure 38: Anticipated and realised benefits of providing Apprenticeships



Base: All/All who hoped to achieve; As with the 2012/13 survey, those who 'Actually achieved as a % of those who hoped to' does not include 'Not Stated' responses

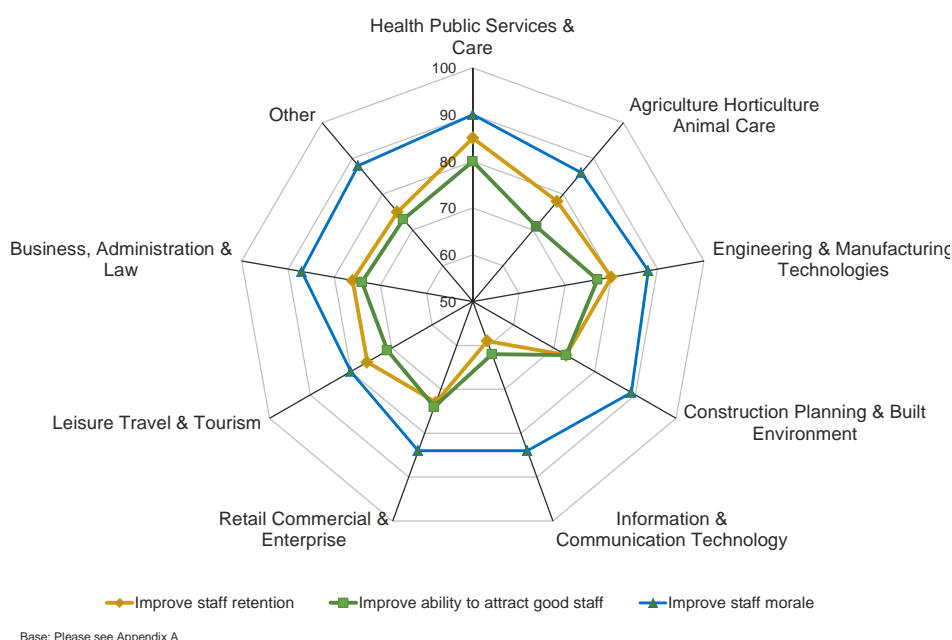
There was some variation in the benefits realised according to the main reason employers had engaged with Apprenticeships versus another form of training. These are highlighted below:

1. Employers who chose to offer Apprenticeships because they “are the required form of training in this industry / occupation” were:
 - More likely to say that they had maintained or improved future skill levels in the business (92%)
 - Less likely to say they had lowered the overall wage bill (65%).
2. Employers who engaged in Apprenticeships because they “are most relevant to the needs of the business” were:
 - More likely to have realised a range of benefits, including improved staff morale (94%), improved product or service quality (93%), improved productivity (91%), introducing more new ideas to the organisation (89%), and improved staff retention (86%).
3. Employers who chose to use Apprenticeships because they “cost less than the alternatives / are free” were:
 - More likely to say they lowered the overall wage bill (87%).
 - Less likely to have improved staff retention (70%), improved their ability to attract good staff (70%), or to bring new ideas to the organisation (76%).
4. Employers who chose Apprenticeships mainly because of convenience (because the training provider handles most of the recruitment and/or administration) were:
 - More likely to have lowered the overall wage bill (87%).
 - Less likely to report they had won business (68%), improved staff morale (86%), improved their image in the sector (82%), or maintained or improved future skill levels (85%).
5. Employers who chose Apprenticeships because they believed they “are the best way to aid recruitment and retention” were:
 - More likely to say they have won business (81%), improved staff retention (84%), improved their ability to attract good staff (85%), or improved staff morale (93%).

Staff-related benefits by main framework

In the rest of this section we examine the extent to which benefits were sought and realised, by main framework⁴⁰. Looking at specific **staff benefits** (Figure 39), ‘improved staff morale’ was once again the main benefit realised across all main frameworks (particularly among employers delivering Health, Public Services & Care, or Construction, Planning & Built Environment). Employers delivering Information Technology & Communication as their main framework were much less likely to have realised benefits associated with staff retention or attracting good staff.

Figure 39: Staff-related benefits realised, by main framework



Finance-related benefits by main framework

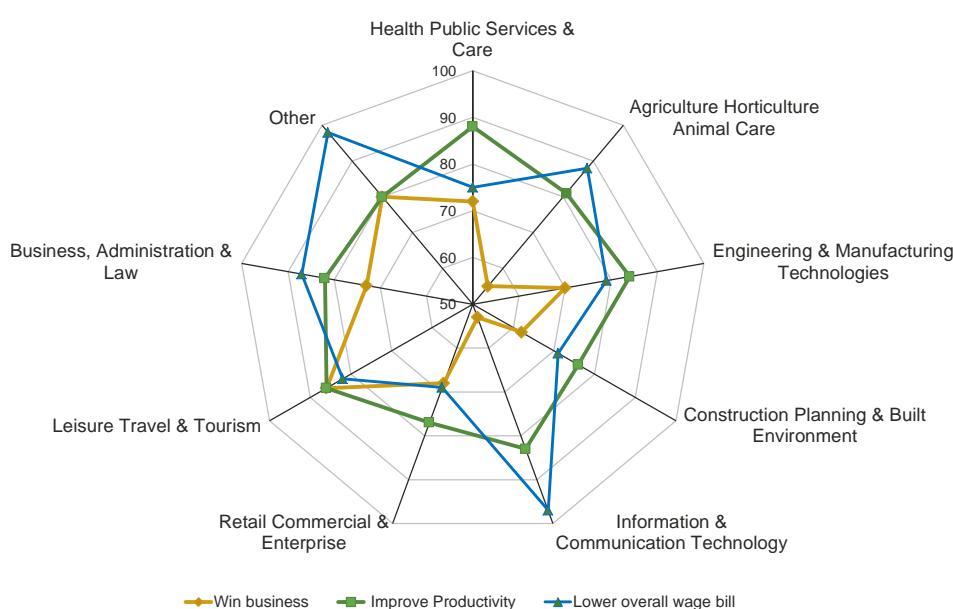
The proportion of employers who obtained financial benefits varied more by main framework than staff-related benefits (Figure 40). Whilst the share of employers who said they had improved productivity was fairly consistent, there was far more variation in terms of winning business or lowering the overall wage bill.

Employers delivering Leisure, Travel & Tourism were more likely to say they had won new business, whereas this benefit was realised to a much lesser extent by those delivering Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care, or Information & Communication Technologies.

⁴⁰ Caution is urged in making comparisons to last year due to small sample sizes.

Lowering the overall wage bill was more frequently realised by those delivering ‘Other’⁴¹ Frameworks or Information & Communication Technology. However, again, caution is recommended in drawing conclusion due to the small base sizes.

Figure 40: Realisation of financial related benefits by main framework



Base: Please see Appendix A

Business improvements by main framework

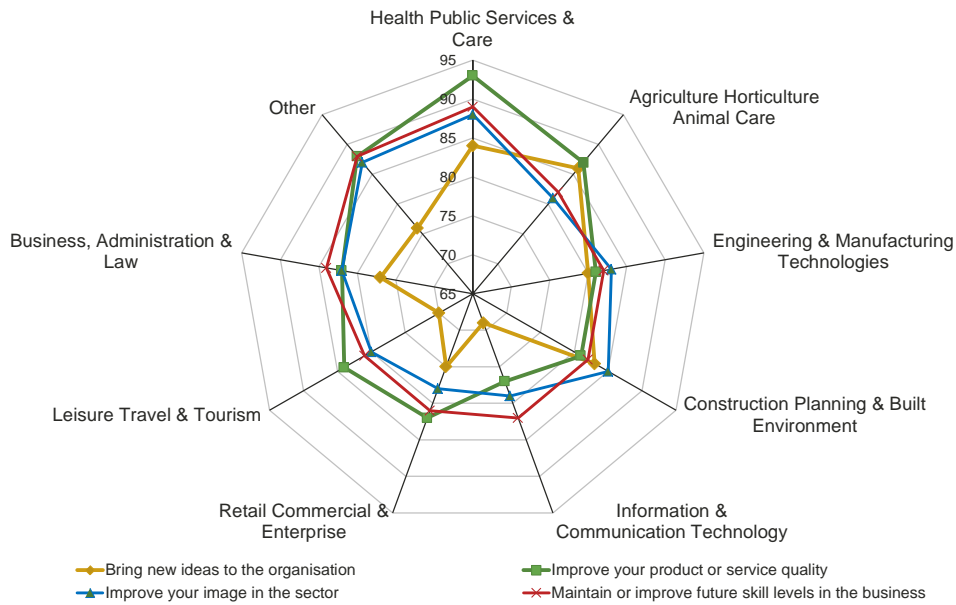
The final four benefits grouped under business improvements⁴² were cited consistently by employers across all main frameworks⁴³, except for ‘Bringing new ideas to the organisation’ (Figure 41). This benefit was realised more by employers delivering Construction, Planning & Built Environment, or Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care, and less by those delivering Leisure, Travel & Tourism or Information & Communication Technologies.

Across the other business improvement benefits, employers citing Health, Public Services & Care were most likely to say that delivering Apprenticeships had ‘Improved their image’ and ‘Maintained or improved future skill levels’. In addition, they were most likely to say that Apprenticeship training had led to ‘Improved product or service quality’.

⁴¹ ‘Other’ consists mainly of Arts and Education Frameworks

⁴² In last year’s report ‘Win business’ was included in this group. This year, ‘Win business’ has been moved to Financial Benefits, because the newly added benefit of ‘Maintaining or Improving future skill levels in the business’ has been included here.

⁴³ Please note the finer grained scale on Figure 41.

Figure 41: Realisation of business improvement benefits by main framework

Base: Please see Appendix A

8. Current apprentices and future plans

Key findings

Similar to 2013, three in five employers (59%) had current apprentices at the time of the survey. Amongst those *without* current apprentices, the majority said that they planned to continue their involvement with the Apprenticeship programme (59%) or were reviewing it (22%). This is consistent with 2013 and indicates that, in most cases, the lack of current apprentices was a temporary gap rather than a decision to discontinue altogether.

As in 2013, the majority of employers (79%) are committed to the Apprenticeship programme and plan to continue to offer Apprenticeships. One in six (12%) were currently undecided or were reviewing their involvement and only nine per cent were not planning to offer further Apprenticeships. Although still a minority, this represents a small but significant increase since last year and appears to be driven by a rise among small employers (up from 9% to 13%).

Length of involvement with the programme and size of organisation were important determinants of likelihood of future involvement (with larger organisations more committed). By framework, those employers providing more traditional Apprenticeships such as Construction, Planning and Built Environment and Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies were slightly less committed to the programme in future (as in 2013). Importantly for the Apprenticeship reforms that are currently being implemented to increase employer involvement, those who got all the influence they wanted were more likely than those who wanted influence but did not get any to be committed to delivering Apprenticeships in future (83%, compared with 70%).

Overall, more employers projected that the number of apprentices they employ in future would increase rather than decrease. In total, 26% expected to provide more Apprenticeship places than they had done in the past, compared to 13% percent who expected to offer fewer (or would not offer any at all).

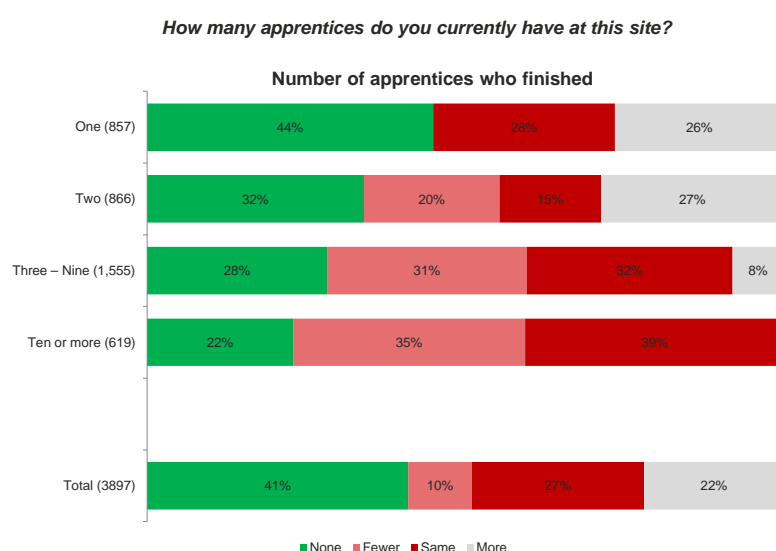
Although the primary focus of the survey was on apprentices who had finished their training, questions were also asked about current provision and future plans to assess how

employer engagement and provision might change in the near future. This section focuses on those issues.

Current apprentices

At the time they were surveyed, 59% of employers in the sample had current apprentices in their workplace, in line with 2013 (62%). Figure 42 shows whether those employers currently had fewer, the same or more apprentices than they had finishing between August 2012 and March 2013 (using the same size bands for current and completed apprentices). Amongst those with only one apprentice who finished within that timescale, 46% did not have any current apprentices on-site, with just over a quarter who continued to employ one (28%) and a similar proportion that now employed more than one (26%). As in 2013, the proportion of employers with no current apprentices declined in line with the volume of apprentices that had finished training in the year before. Employers whose main frameworks were in 'Health, Public Service and Care' or 'Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies' were more likely than average to be *currently* employing apprentices (71% and 66% respectively), with the former also more likely to be employing multiple apprentices (34% currently had three or more at their site).

Figure 42: Number of current apprentices by number of apprentices who finished their training between August 2012 and March 2013



Base: All employers excluding don't knows (3,897)

Overall the findings are in line with the picture from 2013, which suggested that even some longstanding and high-volume apprentice employers do not have them all the time, but

rather employ them in waves with intervening gaps in between. For example, a quarter of workplaces who had been employing apprentices for 10 years or more currently had no apprentices at their site (24%). This need not be taken as evidence that employers are becoming less willing to provide Apprenticeships – three in five employers with no current apprentices said they planned to take on more in future (59%) and a further one in five (22%) said they were keeping this under review.

Distribution of current apprentices across Level 2 or Level 3 was broadly in line with that found among apprentices who had finished training during August 2012 and March 2013 (Table 4). The comparison is not precise given that the profile on previous levels is derived from administrative sources while that on current ones comes from the survey, where there is more scope for reporting error and ‘don’t know’ responses. Notwithstanding this reservation, there is evidence of a small shift towards Level 3, rising by four points compared with 2012-13 and by six points compared with 2011-12. Employers whose main framework was in ‘Health, Public Service and Care’ were more likely than others to be currently offering Level 3 (68%) while those whose main framework was in ‘Retail and Commercial Enterprise’ were more likely to be offering Level 2 (73%).

Table 4: Levels of Apprenticeship provided, previously and currently ⁴⁴

	Employers with apprentices finishing August 2011 – March 2012	Employers with current apprentices (March 2013)	Employers with apprentices finishing August 2011 – March 2012	Employers with current apprentices (March 2014)
Base	4,009	2,829	4,030	2,626
Level 2	68%	64%	68%	66%
Level 3	48%	51%	50%	54%
Level 4	-	5%	-	7%
Don't know	-	6%	-	6%

Employers with current apprentices were asked how old these were when they started their training (Table 5). The proportion that currently offers Apprenticeships to 19 – 24 year olds has increased since 2013 (from 48% to 53%).

⁴⁴ Data for 2011-12 and March 2013 is sourced from the 2013 Apprenticeship Employer Survey.

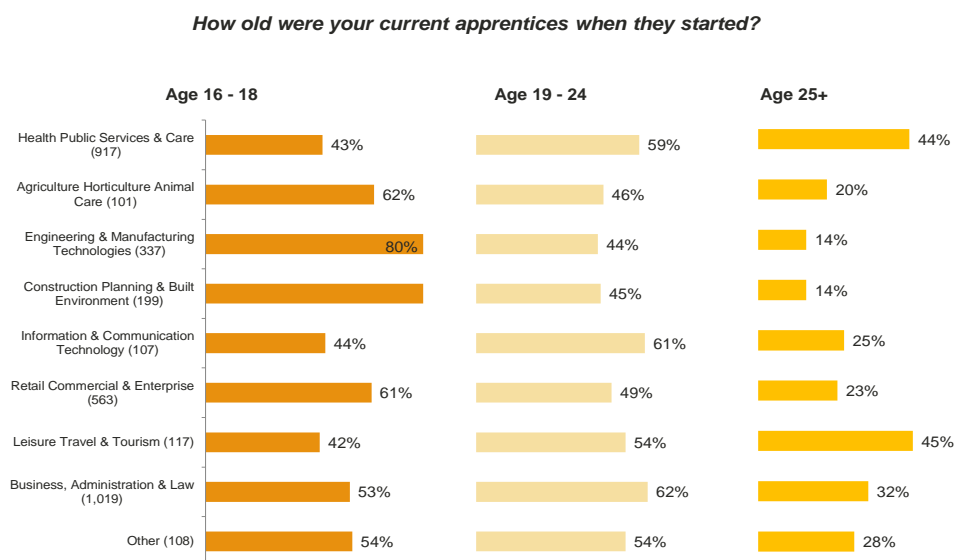
Overall, when compared with 2013, there is a suggestion of a continued shift towards more employers offering Apprenticeships to 19 – 24 year olds and fewer to 16 – 18s, which is likely to be linked to the older age profile in newer, high-growth framework areas such as Health, Public Service and Care.

Table 5: Age of current and former apprentices⁴⁵

	Which of the following age groups have you offered Apprenticeships? (March 2011 – August 2012)	How old were your current apprentices when they started? (March 2013)	Which of the following age groups have you offered Apprenticeships? (March 2012 – August 2013)	How old were your current apprentices when they started? (March 2014)
Base	4,009	2,829	4,030	2,626
16-18 years old	71%	61%	65%	58%
19-24 years old	73%	48%	75%	53%
25 years or older	45%	26%	47%	28%
Don't know	1%	1%	1%	1%

By framework, the findings on current age groups are in line with those identified earlier in this report for completed apprentices (see Section 2). As in 2013, there are stark differences between the more 'traditional' and the newer framework areas (Figure 43). Among current apprentice employers, four in five of those providing Apprenticeships in 'Construction, Planning and the Built Environment' or 'Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies' offer Apprenticeships to 16 – 18 year olds, while those who use frameworks in 'Health, Public Service and Care' and 'Business Administration' are more likely to be providing Apprenticeships to 19 – 24 year olds and those aged 25+ than to 16 – 18s.

⁴⁵ It is important to note the differences in question wording used for previous and current apprentices, which partly account for the differences in results.

Figure 43: Age of current apprentices when they started, by Frameworks offered

Base: All employers with current apprentices (2,626)

English and maths provision offered to current apprentices

Employers with current apprentices were asked whether training providers had offered any of their apprentices the opportunity to study towards GCSE level or higher in English or maths⁴⁶ (Table 6). At present, Level 2 apprentices need to achieve a Level 1 qualification in English and maths, but they should be offered the opportunity to study at Level 2 (i.e. GCSE level) to ensure they have the opportunity to progress. It is important to note that the survey just tells us that employers had staff that were offered those qualifications and not whether they were taken up. Around one in five (18%) employers did not know (similar to 2013, when it was 22%). Among the rest, half said their apprentices were offered the opportunity to do English or maths (50%) – an increase from 42% in 2013⁴⁷.

Some apprentices will already have GCSE level or higher English and maths qualifications and therefore will not need to be offered that element as part of their Apprenticeship training. This is reflected in the differences shown in Table 6. Differences by frameworks provided were in line with 2013. Employers who offered frameworks in Construction, Planning and the Built Environment were still less likely to say their current apprentices had been offered English and maths tuition as part of the Apprenticeship they were doing

⁴⁶ This includes functional skills qualifications as well as GCSEs and higher.

⁴⁷ It should also be noted that this does not necessarily equate to the percentage of *apprentices* who did English and maths as part of their training.

(45%) than those providing other frameworks, especially when compared with those who offered frameworks in Health, Public Service and Care (62%) or Retail and Commercial Enterprise (57%). The proportion of employers who say their apprentices have been offered English and maths has increased significantly among those providing Health, Public Service and Care, Business Administration and Law, and Retail and Commercial Enterprise, compared with 2013.

Table 6: Whether current apprentices had been given the opportunity to study GCSE level or higher in English or maths

	Base ⁴⁸	Yes	No	Don't know
All frameworks provided				
Health, Public Services & Care	917	62%	26%	12%
Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care	101	49%	38%	14%
Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies	337	40%	34%	26%
Construction, Planning & Built Environment	199	45%	43%	12%
Information & Communication Technology	107	39%	31%	30%
Retail & Commercial Enterprise	563	57%	27%	17%
Leisure, Travel & Tourism	117	34%	38%	28%
Business, Administration & Law	1,019	46%	35%	20%
Other	108	50%	29%	21%
Current levels				
Level 2	1,884	51%	32%	17%
Level 3	1,546	52%	33%	15%
Level 4	260	51%	40%	9%
Current number of apprentices				
1 apprentice	675	49%	29%	23%
2 apprentices	504	51%	33%	16%
3-9 apprentices	1,099	50%	34%	16%
More than 10 apprentices	459	54%	36%	10%
Size of organisation				
1-24 employees	760	53%	31%	17%
25-99 employees	600	45%	34%	21%
100+employees	1,157	49%	33%	18%
Total	2,626	50%	32%	18%

⁴⁸ Employers with current apprentices

Paying fees for Apprenticeships

A quarter (25%) of employers with current apprentices said they had paid fees to a provider for the cost of the Apprenticeship training. By frameworks provided, there was a very similar pattern to that identified in 2013, with employers falling into two main groups (Table 7). Paying fees remained much more common among employers providing the more 'traditional' Apprenticeship frameworks of Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies and Construction, Planning and the Built Environment, as well as Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care, and ICT, where around two in five employers had done so. This compares with around one in five among employers who had paid fees for Apprenticeships in Health, Public Service and Care; Retail and Commercial Enterprise; or Leisure Travel and Tourism.

Patterns remained very similar to those reported in 2013, with payment of fees being more common among employers who currently had 10 or more apprentices (38%) and in larger organisations (32%). Paying for Apprenticeships was also more common among employers who were currently providing Level 4, where around half said they had paid fees towards the cost of the training (49%).

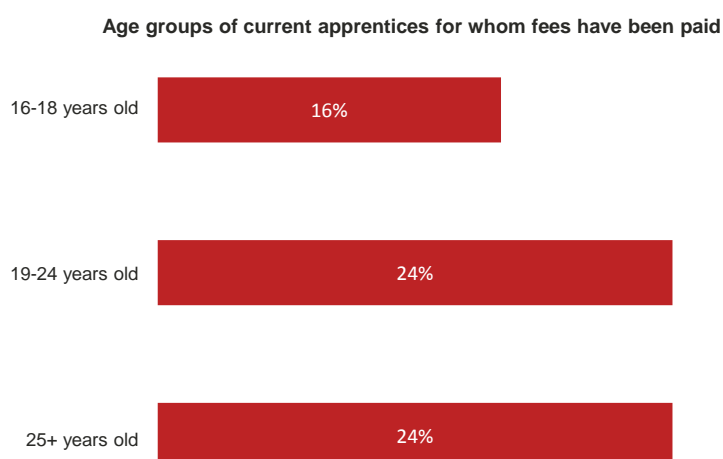
Table 7: Whether fees paid for current apprentices			
	Base ⁴⁹	Yes	No
Frameworks			
Health, Public Services & Care	917	18%	82%
Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care	101	39%	61%
Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies	337	42%	58%
Construction, Planning & Built Environment	199	41%	59%
Information & Communication Technology	107	43%	57%
Retail & Commercial Enterprise	563	14%	86%
Leisure, Travel & Tourism	117	16%	84%
Business, Administration & Law	1,019	27%	73%
Other	108	26%	74%
Level currently providing			
Level 2	1,884	24%	76%
Level 3	1,546	27%	73%
Level 4	260	49%	51%
Current number of apprentices			
1 apprentice	675	23%	77%
2 apprentices	504	19%	81%
3-9 apprentices	988	29%	71%
10 or more apprentices	459	38%	62%
Size of organisation			
1-24 employees	760	18%	82%
25-99 employees	600	29%	71%
100+employees	1,157	32%	68%
Number of years offering Apprenticeships			
Up to 3 years	868	21%	79%
3=10 years	1,023	25%	75%
More than 10 years	652	30%	70%
Total	2,626	25%	75%

⁴⁹ Employers with current apprentices.

Technically, Apprenticeships for 16 – 18s are fully-funded. However, as in 2013, a minority of employers whose current apprentices had started in that age group said they had paid fees for them (Figure 44). Employers were more likely to be paying fees for apprentices aged over the age of 19, as in 2013.

Figure 44: Payment of fees for current apprentices, by age group

Have you paid fees to a training provider for the cost of the Apprenticeship training?



Base: All employers currently employing apprentices in those age groups; 1,436 (16-18s); 1,638 (19-24s); 978 (25+)

Future plans

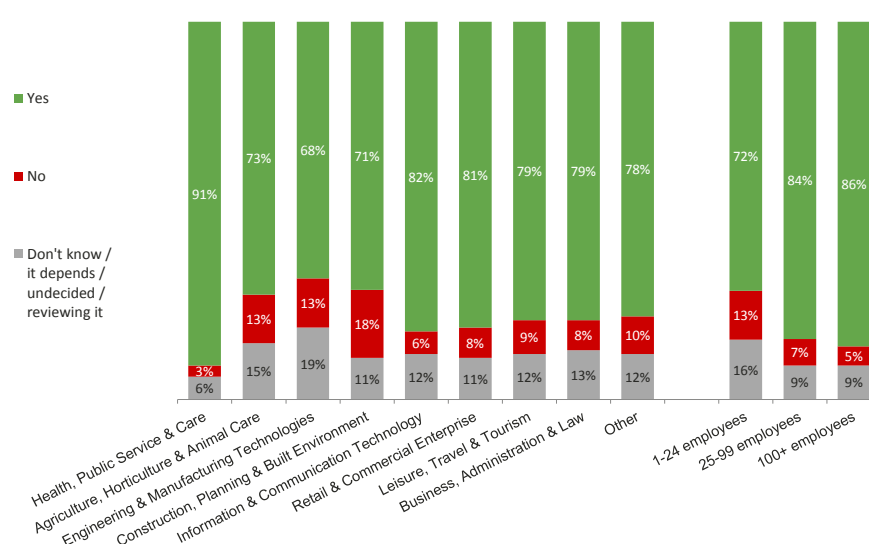
The majority of employers (79%) were committed to Apprenticeships and said they planned to continue offering them in future. One in six (12%) were currently reviewing their involvement, with nine per cent who said they did not plan to offer Apprenticeships in future. Although a very small minority of employers, this is an increase since 2013 (6%) which appears to be driven by a small but significant rise in the proportion of small organisations who say they will stop offering Apprenticeships, from 9% to 13% (Figure 45).

Patterns by frameworks provided remain similar to 2013, with employers providing more ‘traditional’ frameworks in Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies and Construction, Planning and the Built Environment less likely to say they plan to offer Apprenticeships in future (proportions did not differ significantly from 2013). Employers providing Apprenticeships in Health, Public Service and Care were the only ones who were significantly *more* likely to say they would continue to offer Apprenticeships in future, compared with 2013 (91% compared with 86% last year).

Given the renewed policy emphasis on employer influence in Apprenticeships, it is notable that those employers who either had influence over their training both before and during (82%), or who had influence *either* before *or* during, and did not feel they needed any more (83%) were more likely to say they would continue offering Apprenticeships than those who did not have any influence but wanted some (70%).

Similarly, employers who had actively decided to offer Apprenticeships because they were required by their industry (82%), the most relevant training for their business (87%), or the best type of training to aid recruitment and retention (86%) were more likely to say they would continue to use Apprenticeships than employers motivated by low cost (70%) or convenience (73%).

Figure 45: Employers who plan to continue offering Apprenticeships



Base: All employers (4030)

Employers who said they would continue to offer Apprenticeships in future were asked whether they expected the number of Apprenticeship places they offered at their workplace to increase, stay the same or decrease over the next two to three years (Table 8). Overall, around three in five employers expected this to remain static (57%). Where change is expected, it is predominantly in a positive direction, with 26% saying they will be increasing the number of Apprenticeship places they offer and 13% decreasing or withdrawing them altogether. As in 2013, the only framework grouping with a negative 'balance' in future is Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care (possibly linked to recruitment difficulties in those areas of work, as these employers were the least likely to

be satisfied with the quality of applicants and the most likely to want more advice on recruitment). Employers offering frameworks in Health, Public Service and Care and ICT both had a high positive balance driven by projected increases in recruitment.

Table 8: Number of Apprenticeship places expect to offer in next 2-3 years

	Base	More	Same	Less	Will not offer in future	Don't know	Net
Frameworks							
Health, Public Services & Care		29%	57%	6%	3%	5%	+21
Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care		9%	68%	4%	13%	5%	-8
Engineering & Manufacturing echnologies		21%	58%	4%	12%	4%	+5
Construction, Planning & Built Environment		24%	53%	3%	19%	4%	+1
Information & Communication Technology		36%	49%	4%	5%	6%	+25
Retail & Commercial Enterprise		24%	59%	4%	8%	5%	+12
Leisure, Travel & Tourism		31%	61%	3%	3%	3%	+25
Business, Administration & Law		27%	56%	4%	9%	4%	+14
Other		19%	59%	17%	4%	1%	+9
Organisation size							
1-24 employees		23%	58%	3%	13%	4%	+6
25-99 employees		30%	53%	6%	7%	4%	+19
100+employees		28%	57%	5%	5%	5%	+18
Number of apprentices							
1 apprentice		24%	57%	4%	11%	4%	+9
2 apprentices		26%	58%	5%	6%	4%	+10
3-10 apprentices		27%	58%	6%	5%	5%	+17
More than 10 apprentices		38%	47%	6%	4%	5%	+29
Level							
Level 2		25%	57%	4%	9%	4%	+12
Level 3		27%	57%	5%	7%	4%	+16
Number of years offering Apprenticeships							
Up to 3 years		30%	51%	4%	12%	2%	+16
3-10 years		24%	60%	6%	7%	4%	+13
More than 10 years		23%	65%	3%	6%	3%	+14
Total	4,030	26%	57%	4%	9%	4%	+13

Larger workplaces and those with 10+ apprentices who finished their training between August 2012 and March 2013 were more likely to say they expect to increase the number of Apprenticeship places they offer – a positive sign for overall Apprenticeship growth seeing as these contribute a high percentage of the overall apprentice intake in any one year. Table 8 shows that, even among small workplaces and those who have been involved in Apprenticeships for the least length of time, there were more employers who planned to increase their intake than to decrease it or withdraw altogether.

9. Conclusions

Like last year, this year's evaluation has found high levels of satisfaction with the Apprenticeship programme among both employers and apprentices. Employers and apprentices alike continue to report a range of economic and skills-related benefits from their involvement in Apprenticeships, demonstrating that the programme is delivering the qualifications and skills they need. Improved skill levels, better staff morale, enhanced product or service quality and higher productivity were the most anticipated and the most commonly reported employer benefits.

Overall satisfaction with Apprenticeships remains high among employers, who were most satisfied with the quality of the Apprenticeship training and assessment, and the flexible way these were offered by their training provider. However, there remain stubborn variations by main framework area. Small employers, too, remain consistently less likely to be satisfied both overall and on a range of supporting measures, in particular the extent of influence, which, along with the quality of applicants, is the area where employers were least satisfied as a whole.

The Apprenticeship reforms are built on the assumption that employers want to have influence – which many do – but some employers who want influence still find it difficult to exercise this because of limited opportunity, capability or belief that having an influence is possible, and others do not want any influence at all. This is a continuing challenge for the Apprenticeship reforms going forward, although it is encouraging that more employers this year said they wanted influence, than last year. As could be expected, small employers feel less able to exert influence because, compared to larger employers they employ fewer apprentices and have a less established training infrastructure. However, small employers also account for the majority of employers with apprentices, and therefore, their engagement in, and ability to shape, the training their employees receive is critical to meeting the objectives of the reforms to create a demand-led and employer-responsive skills system.

The survey findings show that employers who had influence were more likely than those who did not to be satisfied with Apprenticeships overall and on a range of other measures, as well as reporting higher completions and greater commitment to offering Apprenticeships again in future. This suggests that the reforms' emphasis on increasing

employer influence in Apprenticeship content and standards will have positive impacts on these factors going forward. This survey focuses on employers with apprentices who *finished* their training between August 2012 and March 2013, which means that the cohort it covers are unlikely to have been directly affected by reforms such as Apprenticeship Trailblazers, being implemented from late 2013 onwards. The impact of such reforms should start to come through among employers with apprentices who finish their training in 2014-15 and beyond.

Limited awareness and therefore engagement in Apprenticeships remains an issue among certain subgroups, reflected in the continuing lack of recognition among a significant minority of employers and apprentices that they are undertaking an Apprenticeship. This may simply suggest a lack of *awareness* about what the training is called, but on a deeper level it could also suggest a lack of *engagement* in what the training delivers – further research would be beneficial here. This was most apparent amongst employers who had recruited from existing staff, as well as amongst the apprentices recruited in this way. Linked to this, employers and apprentices in the newer frameworks (Retail & Commercial Enterprise; Health, Public Service & Care; Leisure, Travel & Tourism; and Business, Administration & Law) were most likely to be unaware that they were doing an Apprenticeship. Apprentices undertaking these frameworks were mainly interested in getting a qualification.

Since the vast majority of employers were using providers to deliver their Apprenticeship training, these findings underline the questions raised in last year's report about how providers are presenting Apprenticeship programmes to some employers and apprentices. They also raise questions about the possible impacts of changes to Apprenticeship funding. With greater financial co-investment required of employers in future, will they continue to fund an Apprenticeship programme if they are unclear about what they are getting, or more interested in specific elements of the programme, like the technical certificate? Among employers who recognised they were delivering an Apprenticeship, those who only recruited existing employees were more likely to say they were using Apprenticeships because these cost less than the alternatives, or were free (although this reason was still the least common). This is a particular issue in sectors where the Apprenticeships being offered to existing staff are primarily aimed at developing skills in a current job role, rather than to prepare for a new or different job: the reforms mean that in

future, Apprenticeships should only be offered to existing employees where substantial training is required to achieve competency in their occupation.

Finally, last year's evaluation highlighted variations in the extent to which the different frameworks are delivering value for money (which is also closely inter-related to how employers are using the programme). The apprentice findings showed very different learner experiences depending on the framework undertaken and similar patterns were found in this year's survey. In the case of the newer frameworks highlighted above, the amount of time spent training remains shorter compared to other frameworks, as does the average length of time taken to complete training. A wide number other benefits such as perceived impact, pay rises and promotions were reported by a smaller proportion of apprentices on newer frameworks. As strong growth in apprentice numbers has taken place in these frameworks, and further expansion of Apprenticeships is planned, it remains important to ensure the quality of training and its ability to make a genuine difference to the life of the apprentice is not compromised.

Appendices

A1 Survey methodology

The Apprenticeship Evaluation Employer Survey 2013 comprised 4,030 interviews with employers who had “*employees who had finished (though not necessarily completed) Apprenticeship training between 1st August 2012 and 31st March 2013*”. The interviews were conducted using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). Fieldwork took place from 5th February to 26th March 2014.

Sample design

The sample frame of in-scope employers was derived from the Individual Learner Record (ILR), which contained a flag to identify the employer for each apprentice. This enabled a sample frame of employers offering Apprenticeships during the reference period to be identified. The list of in-scope employers was then matched to the Blue Sheep database to append employers’ telephone numbers, addresses, employee sizes and industry sector information. The additional information about each employer’s apprentices⁵⁰ was also appended to the sample to inform the sample design and analysis.

The survey adopted random probability sampling. The sample was stratified by “number of apprentices who finished training during the reference period” prior to selection. All employers with more than 10 apprentices were included since this group was relatively rare. A representative sample by framework was drawn within each strata.

Response rate

The adjusted response rate was 38%. The co-operation rate was 58%. A detailed breakdown is presented in Table A1 overleaf.

⁵⁰ Such as the total number of apprentices, framework(s) delivered and the level of the Apprenticeship qualification(s).

Table A1: Response rate

Final sample status	Total sample used (N)	Total sample used (%)	Valid sample (%)
Valid sample			
Achieved interviews	4030	25	38
Respondent quit interview	570	4	5
Refusal	2336	15	22
Soft appointment/ no answer	2382	15	22
Communication/ language difficulties	28	0	0
Maximum number of tries	314	2	3
Not available during fieldwork	1081	7	10
Total valid sample	10741	67	100
Invalid sample			
Bad numbers	3916	24	
Ineligible	1364	9	
Total invalid sample	5280	33	
Total sample used	16021		
Unadjusted response rate (%)		25	
Adjusted response rate (%)			38
Cooperation rate (%)			58

Source: Ipsos MORI

Weighting

The following weights were applied to correct for the unequal selection probabilities resulting from the disproportionate stratification in the sample.

1. Interlocking weights for Apprenticeship framework x Level (see Table A2)
2. Rim weights for number of Apprentices (see Table A3).

Table A2: Interlocking Weight: Apprenticeship framework x Level

Framework	Both levels	L2 Only	L3 only	Total
Business, Administration and Law	3.2%	15.4%	8.8%	27.4%
Health, Public Services and Care	3.8%	5.3%	7.9%	17.0%
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	2.3%	13.1%	4.3%	19.7%
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	0.5%	5.6%	3.3%	9.5%
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	0.2%	4.2%	3.5%	7.9%
Business, Administration and Law & Retail and Commercial Enterprise	1.8%	1.4%	0.1%	3.4%
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	0.1%	1.4%	0.8%	2.3%
Business, Administration and Law & Health, Public Services and Care	2.2%	0.4%	0.4%	3.0%
Other	3.6%	2.8%	3.3%	9.7%
Total	17.7%	49.7%	32.6%	100.0 %

Source: Ipsos MORI

Table A3: Number of apprentices weighting profile

Number of apprentices	Weighted %
1	60.4%
2	18.1%
3 to 5	14.5%
6 or more	7.1%
Total	100%

Source: Ipsos MORI

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URN BIS/14/1207